

# PUNCH

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PUBLIC apprehension about the imminence of accidental annihilation by U.S. bombers has been only moderately eased by the assurance that the forty-five B.47s now in this country "are under the direct control of Strategic Air Command Headquarters at Omaha, Nebraska." Couldn't the finger on the button live somewhere in the target area?

## CHARIVARIA

MR. RICHARD NUGENT's statement in the House to the effect that the speed limit is being raised to 40 m.p.h. because motorists in 30 m.p.h. limit areas are driving at 40 already is thought to herald an entirely new legislative policy, in which habitual tax-evaders, confidence tricksters, etc., will be similarly accommodated.

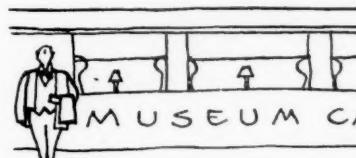
LITTLE surprise was caused by news that first-aid lectures to children at Chessington, Surrey, would be followed



at once by "talks for mothers on how to deal with accidents in the home."

AT A TIME of widespread peace hopes the Canadian Indians have chosen as their Parliamentary representative a Blackfoot Chief named Many Guns. Disappointed pale-faces in Toronto are saying "Ugh."

ALARMED at the neglected state of historic railway relics British railway



societies are calling on Sir Brian Robertson to provide "a national transport museum." Cost is estimated at about £1,200,000,000.

THERE is a movement for banks to stay open longer on one day of the week. Friday would be most suitable, giving opportunity for a second wages withdrawal after the usual grab by pay bandits.

A *News Chronicle* feature propounds a theory that Dr. Nkrumah may try to organize a rapprochement between Nasser and Ben-Gurion. "If he could get them even for half an hour to see the whites of each other's eyes . . ." But, traditionally, isn't that when the shooting starts?

## Bulganin in the Bank

LAST time they made you Chairman of the Bank  
The post appeared to carry Marshal's rank.  
How to promote you now? I'd give long odds  
Your next step up will be to join the gods.



## Punch Diary

THE Budget once again reminds us that the year is coming into its pleasantest reach. Vernal flowers, the Derby, Test Matches, the smell of new mown grass, long, light evenings with tennis players shimmering in the dusk like white owls—it is thoughts like these that the Budget arouses in these of us who find it impossible to hope we shall get much out of it in terms of hard cash. They are not likely to be thoughts we share with the Government. Their attitude to spring, to high summer, to the imagination, is shown by the cut in the Tate Gallery purchasing grant. Until Mr. Dalton, the Tate did not have a grant at all. The Conservatives do not like to show contempt openly for the Arts, so they nibble away. Pictures, like a National Theatre, are luxuries; the hydrogen bomb and expense accounts are necessities. But hey-ding-a-ding, hey-ding-a-ding, when the Budget comes, can May be far behind?

### Spring Clean

ANTI-LITTER techniques are improving. A suggestion has been put forward for edible bus-tickets. The Princess Royal has said that litter is a bee in her bonnet. Certain enlightened tourist centres are labelling their waste-baskets in five languages, including American ("Trash"). What a change from those palpable old errors of the anti-litter leaflet which blew about the streets for days afterwards. A Ministry of Housing release is headed "LITTLE GIRL WITH DOG WILL FOCUS ANTI-LITTER DRIVE." The dog is only the bait, and has no function except to be bigger than the little girl on the poster, but it is just the

thing to make litter-bugs ashamed of themselves. Perhaps Windsor has the brightest idea: hoardings which say "Don't let the Queen see litter when she looks out of the window." It seems a pity that, owing to circumstances outside their control, other towns can't very well use that one.

### Limits

I HAPPENED to be driving along one of the new 40 m.p.h. limit stretches on Sunday evening, when we week-enders flood back into London. There were a lot of fast cars about, but we were all very law-abiding; only the occasional dare-devil ventured 45 m.p.h.; 42 or so was nearer the consensus. Beside me a fiendish-looking sports car popped along as if it had a frog in its exhaust. Then came a roundabout and the 30 m.p.h. limit, with a splendid reach of dual carriage-way opening up beyond. As I swung out of the roundabout there was a roar at my side and the sports car was gone. I trod on the gas and in a moment we were all swishing along at a steady 50. It was like coming out of prison.

### Quiet Records

THE report in the French sports paper *L'Equipe* about a student at the University of Southern California throwing the discus the fantastic distance of 201 ft. at "a minor meeting" in Victorville, Cal., made me wonder how often world sporting records have been casually set up on village greens and never made public. How many four-minute miles have been achieved, around lumpy hayfields and rain-soaked bomb-sites, by Saturday afternoon athletes simply trying to keep warm? Are there scratch crews who commonly tear up and down the Leeds-Liverpool Canal at a speed that would make those Oxford and Cambridge people look like weakly tyros, and then go home for tea without so much as a glance at a stop-watch? I like to think there may be. For myself, I find I have a sneaking ambition to do a 16 ft. pole vault with a fractured pole one of these fine days, in the privacy of my back garden, and not even tell my best friend.

### World of Music

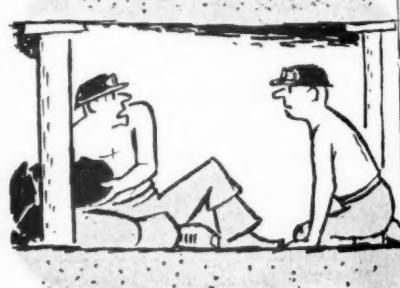
IS skiffle dying? It seems only fair (on the non-skiffing public) that a vogue that shot up like a rocket

should shortly come down like the stick. All the recent front-page reports of resignations by stars of the B.B.C.'s *6.5 Special* hinted that skiffle and rock are on the way out, and, to quote the assistant head of TV light entertainment, "there is a return to the ballad." I must warn those unversed in the jargon of Tin Pan Alley, whose hopes may rise disproportionately at this, that a ballad comeback will not mean revivals of *The Lost Chord* and *The Long Day Closes*, still less of *The Erl King* or *I Attempt From Love's Sickness*. To-day's ballads are in general sentimental moanings for lost or unattainable loves—*No Flowers by Request* and *You Too Can Be a Dreamer*. And, on their return, the unschooled critic will still be heard dismissing them as "all this skiffle and rock you get nowadays."

### Diplomatic Follies

AMONG the reasons given by the B.B.C. for banning a sketch written for Peter Sellers recently were that it was built on an impersonation of the Prime Minister (who was made to use abusive language to his wife), and that it made fun of the Summit talks. (The B.B.C.'s capital S.)

I can't help feeling that they would have done better to confine their strictures to the first issue. I would have said that the history to date of the Summit talks, or rather of the idea of having them, was excellent material for cross-talk comedy in the classic mould. "What was that proposal I saw you with last night?" "That wasn't a proposal, that was a long and argumentative letter."



Hollowood

"We must be through to the storage quarry—I've dug this lump twice!"



"YOUR LIFE IN THEIR HANDS"

# EAST IS WEST . . .

ERIC LINKLATER

contributes to the discussion on the cold war and the menace  
of nuclear weapons

## THE NEW PROMETHEAN AGE

WHEN Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to men his gift must have caused havoc and consternation before his beneficiaries learnt to control and domesticate it. How many villages went up in flames, how many forests shrank to blackened stumps, before the first pots were baked and the first iron was smelted? We, with a more fearful donation in our hands, can sympathize with those of our ancestors whose neighbours were careless with their cooking-fires and piled them too high when a gale of wind was blowing. But fire was not a gift that could be rejected, nor is the terrible power engendered by fission and fusion. At such a *trahison des sevants* the Promethean spirit might abandon mankind for ever.

That a lethal weapon was the first product of the divided atom was an accident of time: the scientists were mobilized for war, and instead of spending a leisurely half-century in devising a harmless machine for the conduction of atomic power to industry, they rapidly produced a bomb. But within fifty years from now it is probable that nuclear weapons will be regarded as a mere by-blow, a minor issue of the power and knowledge which are beginning to usher in a new millennium. It is almost certain that the great armouries of the world will still contain nuclear weapons—their propellant engines and their ready war-heads—for there is no instance known in history of a nation abandoning its arms unless to equip itself with better weapons, and it seems idle to hope that the menace of the H-bomb will reverse the current of history.

The world's problem is diplomatic: to prevent the explosion of H-bombs, and eventually to establish a benign control of the armouries that house them. It is tempting, but fallacious, to regard the problem as a moral issue: that is

the merest vanity of judgment while moralities are still local and the crimes of Clapham are chaste in Magnitogorsk. It is necessary, however, to discern beneath the diplomatic problem the strategic requirements for successful diplomacy. A sound strategic position may be of more advantage to the diplomat than to the general who must succeed him if he fails; for with the strength of such a foundation beneath him the diplomat may avert military action. And our immediate concern is with the strategic disposal of nuclear missiles of intermediate range.

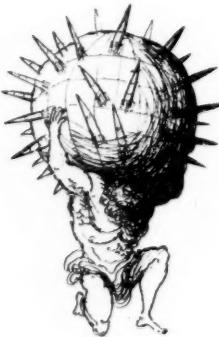
There is general agreement—even lighthearted agreement from foreign observation-posts—that in the event of a major war between what is euphemistically called the free world and what is conventionally regarded as the Communist *bloc*, this country of Great

adapted to the holding of such a position as—shall we say?—the imperturbable Finns on their cold frontier.

To bring into full alliance the political geography of our situation and the moral qualities of our people it is necessary, however, that missile batteries—if the military situation is such that we do indeed require them—should be manned, commanded, and controlled by our own soldiers, generals, and government. To resign our defence, if only in part, to a foreign government would not only involve us in what might be the private fears of that government, but throw away a strategic advantage that would otherwise be a source of strength to our own diplomats.

We must accept the fact that Soviet Russia is convinced—wrongly, as we believe—of America's hostile intentions; we must also admit that Russia's warlike preparation is such as to alarm all who live west of the Curtain. Communism in its traditional militancy—as militant as Islam in the years of its expansion—has armed Russia with a prodigious host of soldiers, a sufficiency of long-range missiles to give Mr. Khrushchev the confidence to boast of them, and a fleet of five hundred submarines. Now submarines are built not so much for defensive action as for an offensive or—let us be fair—a counter-offensive purpose; and the strategic purpose of the Russian submarine fleet is obvious. If war broke out between the United States and Russia the Russian submarines would besiege our islands, try to cut our supply lines and starve us out, and do their best to prevent American reinforcement of its European allies.

To us the submarines may be a greater menace than ballistic missiles, for it is conceivable that a major war might begin without the use of nuclear weapons, and in that event the Russians could engage us with conventional arms;



Britain would be more vulnerable than most. Within the admission, however, is the tacit acknowledgment that until war breaks out this country occupies a diplomatic and strategic position of the first importance. Despite a recent show of excitement—significant perhaps of our innate protestantism—it is also a fact that the people of Britain have been so taught by history and trained by breeding that they are almost as well

torpedo-attack on unarmed merchantmen is now an established convention. That would leave to the United States the onus of launching the first nuclear missiles or dropping the first H-bomb; because a naval offensive of the sort indicated could only be broken, as speedily as it would have to be broken, by direct assault on the nerve centres from which it was directed. But would the United States, now thought to be vulnerable to quick and widespread retaliation, accept that responsibility?

The more we consider such possibilities the more imperative does it appear that we ourselves—within the general framework of NATO and without impairing the strength of that alliance—should control our own weapons and conduct our own diplomacy. For this must be acknowledged: that if we, so notoriously vulnerable, do find it necessary to arm ourselves with nuclear rockets, but man them and control them ourselves, then even the Russians, obtuse as they often are, could hardly fail to recognize them as purely defensive weapons; but if we surrender real control to the Americans, and content ourselves with holding the pistol while they look after the bullets, then Soviet Russia will certainly regard our islands as the forward positions of that aggressive policy which, wrongly but stubbornly, they impute to America. And our diplomatic advantage will be thrown away, our national peril wantonly aggravated.

The American missiles of intermediate range are designed to be launched from ground level; and sites have been found for them in the eastern counties. The exact locations are as yet a secret, but in a country so small as England they will soon be known and will then have as much to recommend them as King Harold's disposition of his shield-wall, at the battle of Hastings, on a ridge where it could most conveniently be assailed by William's Norman archers; with a result that is widely known. The ideal platforms for these rocket-guns would, for obvious reasons, be sea-going and submersible; but the building of missile-carrying submarines is probably beyond our means, and in any case could not be done in a hurry. Surely, however, it would be possible to use some of our old battleships, now in the hands of the ship-breakers, which would have the three advantages of

mobility, the choice of bases in the sea-lochs of the west, and the saving of agricultural land from occupation by the military.

We are living in a Balance of Terror, and no major prophet is needed to foresee that in the next few years its oscillations will fret our nerves and harry our dreams. Within five years from now it is probable that some of the lesser powers will have acquired nuclear weapons of a sort—perhaps only the so-called tactical weapons—and in some crisis, natural or fictitious, they may be used. Indeed, an actual demonstration of our general peril may be necessary to persuade the major powers that notification and control of nuclear weapons is as desirable as international insistence on inoculation against small-pox, plague, and yellow fever.

The prospect is far from hopeless. If diplomacy can remain in the saddle



the troubles of the imminent lustrum may gradually subside, and with the redistribution of economic power that the Harwell discoveries seem to promise, lapse into a comparative equilibrium. The diplomatic habit of discussion, at every level, should be encouraged, for it can hardly do worse than waste time, and every year spent on discussion gives the people and governors of Soviet Russia another year in which to grow up. Their childhood was starved and brutal; they came to premature manhood in the agonized heroism of their war against Germany; in victory they were avaricious and insanely suspicious; but now they are beginning to realize their strength, and in time they may discover that they are strong enough to live more easily. Mr. Khrushchev's temper is

unreliable, but he is recognizably more human than the stony Caucasus of Stalin's arrogance; and if, in the next five years, Communism can feed, clothe, and house its people as well as it has armed them, it will be very strange if Communism does not become more liberal in its internal policy, more tolerant in its external relations.

The trouble-making lands of Arabia may lose the disastrous importance of their oil-wells when the scientists can more firmly promise an alternative source of power from solar heat and the cold bounty of the sea; and when the insensate pressure of Africa's exuberantly prolific tribes and their new-found needs passes endurance, that new power may be ready to irrigate deserts, to feed and mollify them. As our investments in peace grow heavier, the inducements to preserve it may become as apparent to dogmatic governments as they are already to the undogmatic peoples of the world; and then, in the dawn of a new Promethean age, the primitive weapons of the darkness before the dawn may be sealed and guarded in their armories, preserved as relics of the past, totems of a once powerful but now exhausted superstition—such as Stalin embalmed in the Kremlin or the gold packed away in Fort Knox.

The distant prospect offers much; but to bring it into focus, through the nearer view, we in Britain must realize and retain control of all the advantages of our seemingly so precarious situation. The forces of the world are not constant, for now the effort to change it seems *here*, and the resistant load is *there*—but then they exchange positions—while we, by grace or penalty of geography, remain always somewhere near the fulcrum. And though to sit on the fence is contemptible, to sit on the fulcrum may be judicious and serviceable to all.

The views expressed in this series do not necessarily represent those of PUNCH. Other contributors will be:

H. F. ELLIS  
Fr. TREVOR HUDDLESTON  
Dr. J. BRONOWSKI  
ALISTAIR COOKE  
D. ZASLAVSKI (of *Krokodil*)



*"And paint the eyes so that they seem to follow everyone round the board room."*

## The Cornish Redoubt

By H. F. ELLIS

EVERY once in a while there rises up from the columns of one's newspaper a phrase or sentence, some tiny unheralded remark or incident, so charmingly bizarre, so instinct with the lovable oddity of man's nature, that the grey horizon of life is momentarily irradiated and a warm gush of affection for the whole human race inundates the reader. Or, if not that, at least one goes on reading. "Serendipity" is the name coined by Horace Walpole for the happy faculty of lighting by accident upon such treasures: and I could with ease write you an engaging essay under that title in the manner of Sir Harold Nicolson, had he not himself already done so.

The subject of this present paper is,

by way of contrast, the use of old traction engines in the event of war. It is not a technical paper. The plain fact is that old traction engines, offensively at least, are no use at all in war. Whether they are of any use *defensively* is perhaps arguable but beside the point. The important and fascinating thing is that in 1950 there was a dentist who thought they were and ultimately went bankrupt for his belief.

The story, for the benefit of those who lack the art of serendipity and missed the news item, is simply told. Mr. James Gerald Douglas, who gave up his practice as a dentist in 1951, bought an old traction engine in 1950 and stored it in a Cornish village at a rental of five shillings a week. When he

received a claim for 234 weeks' rent—that would be in late 1954, or early '55, on the face of it—he filed his own petition in bankruptcy, and towards the end of March, 1958, the affair matured, with the inevitable gradualness of the law. Mr. Douglas attended the London Bankruptcy Court and got into my newspaper. So far, all is straightforward. It might have happened to anybody. One buys an old traction engine, arranges for its temporary accommodation, forgets about it in the bustle of clearing up one's practice, and is suddenly faced with this enormous bill for garaging. The only thing to do, in the absence of assets, is to go bankrupt.

We now come to the odd feature in the affair.

"At that time (1950)," relates my newspaper, presumably quoting Mr. Douglas in *oratio obliqua*, "he had bought a lot of other equipment and vehicles, because he wanted to protect himself and a number of associates in the event of war." (The italics are mine, except of course for the words *oratio obliqua* which are, in a sense, Roman.)

This was the sentence that caught my eye and flooded me with that feeling of euphoria that I have already, in my halting way, attempted to describe. Fear of war is now a commonplace of existence, but in 1950, at the time of the Korean conflict, it was relatively new and extremely acute. All of us desired to protect ourselves against the horrors of a world war, and some no doubt bought in extra sugar or re-excavated their garden shelters. But in the main, then as now, we were at a loss, running hither and thither and hoping for the best. Mr. Douglas stands out as perhaps the only private individual who had a plan. He bought an old traction engine (an "historical Cornish engine" the report says) together with a lot of other equipment and vehicles. Precisely what the other equipment and vehicles were, we are not told; it is part of the fascination of the whole incident that so much is left unsaid. But one may fairly assume, from the only bit of concrete evidence we have, that the vehicles at least would be cumbrous and old. One does not buy a brand-new three-wheeler or an up-to-date motor mower as part and parcel of a plan that includes, perhaps even hinges upon, an historical Cornish traction engine.

What, then, was the plan?

The recurrence of the Cornish motif is significant. Here, in this remote promontory, the indigenous inhabitants of our island have from time immemorial sought sanctuary from the invader. It was to Cornwall, no less than to Wales and the Scottish Highlands, that our Iberian ancestors in the face of Celt, and Celt in the face of Roman, withdrew in sullen intractability. And it was here, I think, that Mr. Douglas and his associates planned to make their last defiant stand. One pictures him at bay with his fellow dentists behind a laager of old steamrollers, hansom cabs and antique fire engines. Probes have been sharpened, forceps are at the ready. Batteries of electric drills, held in hands that are rock

steady even at this hour, shrill a deadly menace at the approaching foe. The locale, unless my imagination is running away with me, is Tintagel. To the rear the great Atlantic rollers fret and fume. In the forefront, where the shock of the attack must fall, stands an old Cornish traction engine . . .

A student of war, with whom I have discussed this plan, maintains that I am taking the phrase "because he wanted to protect himself" too literally. It is financial protection, he says, that Mr. Douglas was after. In the event of war dentistry might well fall on evil days; there would be power cuts, and the drills would fall silent in mid-excavation. Simultaneously our seaborne supplies of oil would be cut off and motor traffic would come to a standstill. Mr. Douglas and his associates therefore (so the ingenious theory runs) conceived the plan of recouping their losses on dentistry by hiring out old coal-fired vehicles to take the civilian populace to and from their work. It was simple prudence that these vital prime-movers, so essential to the country's existence, should be stored in bomb-free Cornwall.

Well, there it is. Between these two rival explanations of Mr. Douglas's protective arrangements I am not qualified to judge. Indeed there are times when I can believe that neither is right. For the newspaper report concludes with what is perhaps the most surprising statement in all this mystifying affair.

"The Registrar said the traction engine might have an antique value. If it was sold it might clear the outstanding storage charges."

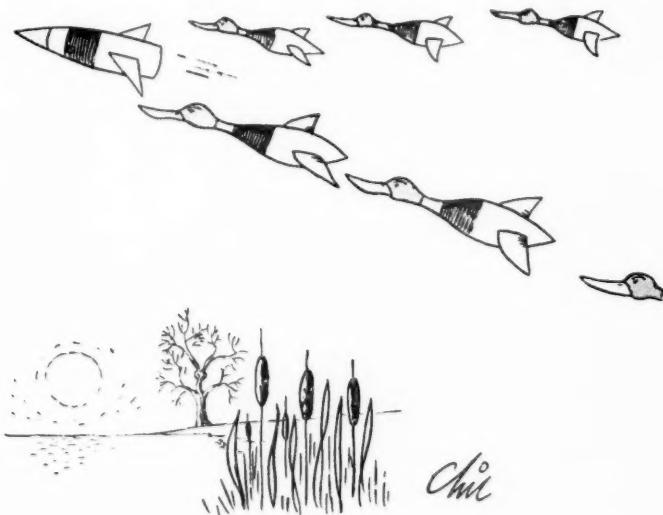
If it was sold! So the machine, at the time of writing, is still in Mr. Douglas's possession. Even after the arrival of that terrible 234-week claim, at a time when Russia had the H-bomb and not the most sanguine ex-dentist could hope that an historical Cornish traction engine would afford adequate protection, financially or otherwise in the event of war, Mr. Douglas clung desperately to his purchase. The five-bobs, one must suppose, continued to clock up against him, but he could not let it go. This does not look like careful planning to me. It looks like love. My final bet is that he just had to have that old Cornish traction engine, and all that talk about "protection in the event of war" was so much self-deception to cover up a purely sentimental purchase.

"Sell it!" one can hear him saying. "Why, it would be worse than having a tooth out."

2 2

"A Wetwang grocer, Mr. John Warwick, took the initiative this morning and rank a Driffield baker. He asked for all the bread—more than 100 loaves—that they were able to supply. He proposed to share them out among the villagers tonight."

*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury*  
Hope they'll know what to do with them.



# Mundane Mutations

*A postscript to the Antarctic Expedition*

By BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

WHEN Dr. Fuchs and his great expedition have thawed out properly they will begin to unpack the frozen fruits of their researches into the snows of Antarctica. They will examine cores of ice and snow formed long ago, and from them they will discover many strange things about the geophysical history of our planet.

In my unscientific way I have already made up my mind what to expect from these discoveries. Deep down in their samples they will find evidence of sulphur staining, and from this they will calculate the precise years in which massive volcanic eruptions took place. They will find traces, I imagine, of great fogs and smogs: they may be able to put a date to the great holocaust of China (Lamb states that burnt pig was first consumed sometime in the seventy-first thousand age of man), to the sacking of Samarkand, the first use of Johnson's Blackband Grit (brand) domestic firelighters, and so on.

I have a vague feeling too—and this is my main point—that they may come across weird snowy veins impregnated by radioactive fall-out, the cemeteries of ancient and hitherto unrecorded civilizations. It seems monstrously arrogant to me to assume, as many scientists do, that ours is the first civilization to have tapped the atomic

secrets of nature, dabbled in nuclear fission and fusion, built piles, reactors, bombs, rockets and the rest, and that we are the first people capable of blowing ourselves to bits with one chain-reacting bang. I put it forward as a serious thesis that earlier dwellers on the earth reached our present level of scientific knowledge on at least four occasions, and I would point out that there is a wealth of numerological and astrological clap-trap to support the argument.

Believing as I do (I am obviously warming to the notion) that nuclear war is nothing new I am driven to make a number of highly important ancillary deductions. "Man is born free," said Rousseau, "and everywhere he is in chains." But Rousseau had no knowledge of Dr. Fuchs and his ice-cores: he had never heard of mutations and mutants. Rousseau could not know, as I know, that we are all the unnatural offspring of survivors of the last nuclear age. Yet Rousseau himself was probably a progressive mutant—that is, a being owing everything, genes, brain-cell structure and gland control, to forces of heredity prompted by radioactivity. A Rousseau writing to-day would put it rather differently. *Man is born free*, he would say, and everywhere he is in chain-reaction.

We are all mutants, my friends, every one of us. Some of us are progressive mutants, freaks burdened with genius; others are regressive mutants, morons, blockheads, apes. And all our troubles stem from the fact that we fail to educate and legislate with the ugly realities of mutation in mind.

In the beginning, in the pre-palaeonuclear age, we were all free and equal. Life was beautiful and stunningly simple. Men were able to indulge in love and the arts in seraphic content. A truly golden age.

Unfortunately, there were some men who cherished the idea of freedom and equality so deeply that they spent all their days probing its secrets. They wanted pluperfect freedom and impeccable equality. And in their enthusiasm they imagined imperfections in the social order where none existed. It was then that they turned to economics, statistics and atomics, and after this it was only a matter of centuries before the pre-palaeonuclear age whimpered to its close.

The next men (mesonuclear men) were all mutants, and the next nuclear age followed as relentlessly as bicarbonate of soda follows a business luncheon. In the nineteenth century A.D., with the approach of the fifth or neo-nuclear age, attempts were made to explain the stupidity of man. All were abortive. Darwin, when he produced his *Origin of Species* and his theories of natural selection, had no knowledge of atomic energy and mutation. His ideas sprang from a moribund politico-social set-up: without realizing it he was the apologist of a self-destroying system of capitalist-communism. And until now—this very minute—no one has managed to improve on Darwin . . .

Here we are then on the threshold of the fifth nuclear cataclysm.

I do not expect many people to believe all this, and therefore I have no hope of the world's leaders understanding the true and gruesome nature of their difficulties. But there is just a possibility that the evidence of Dr. Fuchs's cores will make them see reason. Once it has been established that we are mutants, that we are freaks, dangerous suicidal freaks, then it may be in our power to devise ways and means of fitting each other with strait-jackets.

At the moment the important thing is to unpack those cores.



# Titled Tomboy

By R. G. G. PRICE

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**T**HERE seems to be a run on literary peeresses. What with Lady Diana Cooper in the *Sunday Times* and Deniza, Lady Newborough in the *News of the World*, *Punch* is feeling out of it. From the rapidly dwindling talent still available the best we have been able to do is to sign up, strictly for one appearance, Tilli, Lady Bouvierie. For the sake of our readers her manuscript has been cut to ribbons.

I

It was always gay in the Schloss. My grandfather the Archprinz habitually took his bath by candlelight to the sound of mazurkas, but there was a serious side to him and in his library were to be found volumes by such excellent writers as Homer, Adam Smith and Somerset Maugham. I was the veriest madcap in my early teens and thought nothing of climbing out of my turret window at midnight, catching a wild pony and galloping for many versts over the rolling plain; but a change was soon to come.

II

I became the Belle of the University.

III

To avoid the danger of an imprudent marriage I was sent to England where I passed the Season under the strict supervision of a duenna, who taught me what acreage it was seemly to espouse, whether to distribute my favours only to Conservatives or to keep a weather eye open for a Liberal revival, and how to make royalty give a throaty chuckle. It was a world both golden and glittering, with champagne suppers in punts on the Serpentine, competitions between well-connected wits to write limericks to me, and tennis on Sunday. One night I would be the toast of the cast of *Chu Chin Chow*, the next would find me locked in knotty dialetics with Lord Morley or Lord Bryce. I took lessons in British cooking, and when my old flames arrived as attachés at the Embassy I would astonish them with my soups and porridges.

IV

Lenin invited me to Russia, President Coolidge to America, and the Guards Club to be served in a pie.

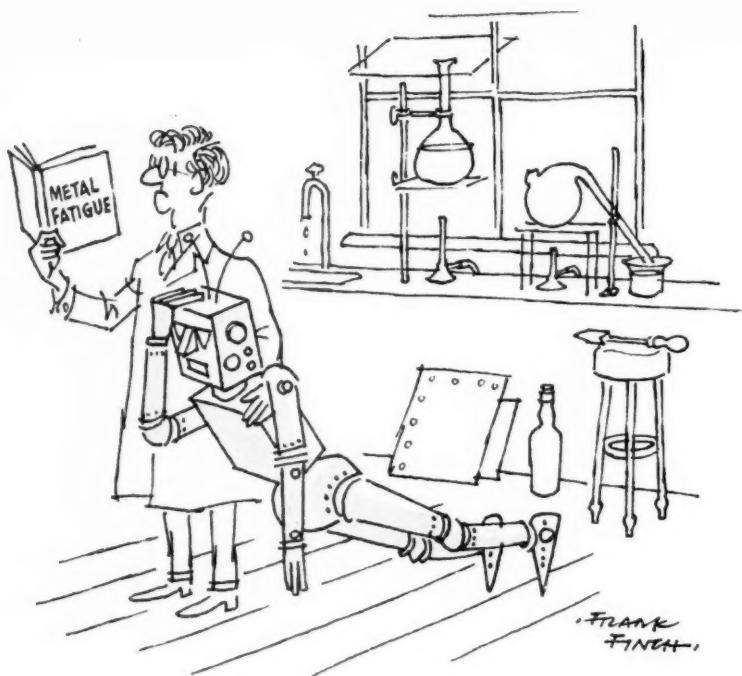
**V** Soon I was marrying into the aristocracy, British and European. All my husbands were devoted to me, and in the majority of cases we have remained good friends after rearranging our matrimonial affairs. Several of them still send me deliriously expensive presents. One day at Deauville I was lunching with a gay company of Pretenders to European thrones, and arguing hotly in my impetuous way for Racine against Schiller, when news was brought to my table that a descendant of the last Emperors of Byzantium had fought a duel with the ruler of one of the richest Indian states, who had complained of the taste of the champagne he had drunk from my slipper the night before. (My portrait was being used to advertise a foot powder and I

felt honour bound to use it freely.) Yet so reckless and unconventional was I that I did not even ask who had won but ordered another bottle of Château Yquem and plunged into plans for a masked ball to which the best blood in Europe was to come in middle-class costume.

VI

During the General Strike I sang patriotic songs from the balcony of my Mayfair house dressed in flowing mourning, which I wore for the end of an era. Lord Balfour was most helpful with suggestions for my programme, and Sir James Barrie taught me *Scots Wha Hae*. He was here, there and everywhere during the strike, like Ozzie Sitwell, and often when a window opened silently behind me while I was singing I could sense he was peering out.





## VII

Oh yes, my charitable work. This was for unmarried wives. There were not very many of these, but what with the divorce laws varying between different countries, and bogus clergymen and victims of bigamists, there were enough to keep my organizing secretary and her staff quite busy. I persuaded dear Agony, the Marchioness of Granby, to give me the use of her magnificent Tudor palace on the Wrekin. I filled it with spare arras from the Venetian Palazzo I had inherited from a collateral branch of my family in Bucharest and added trenchers and other period furniture from Liberty's and a collection of ecclesiastical armour Buffy Danvers III had inherited from his pleasure-loving Long Island mother. During the second world war I worked for the Inter-Allied Hospitality Fund.

## VIII

How can I bring vividly before you the extraordinary combination of looks, birth, brains, physical development and charm that characterized my friends? Once at Balmoral, when Nijinsky had egged us into Greek dancing, one of my fathers-in-law, a duke, though I always called him "Little Uncle," asked me

whether de Xavier Mowbray or Freckles Mortimer came nearer to my idea of a Greek god. With the outspokenness that made people so slow to realize what a little mouse I really was I ripped out "Freckles, of course. He's Pluto."

I was thinking of his vast mineral royalties and had unfortunately quite forgotten that his wife Persephone had just left him.

Often in the Long Galleries of our various country houses we played the game of marking our friends out of ten for virtues. Normally they all got ten for everything, except that Peregrine Bourbon-Conti—he was an Archduke but used his English earldom for business—scored only nine for *Pietas et Gravitas* when we were assessing him as a future Prime Minister. How he used to make Austen Chamberlain giggle! Then there was Mungo Forth, who could win at any ball game once he had had the rules explained to him, translate verse from and into fourteen languages impromptu while he balanced a billiards cue on his chin, and had come first in more examinations than any man in Society. There was nothing he enjoyed more than Russian roulette at Crockfords. Some good judges thought his wit was even more polished than Eadwulf Mercia's. Indeed, all my friends throughout my life have been brilliant, smart and promising.

## IX

And now you will want to know what I think about The Meaning of Life. Well . . .

## Fathers of Science—V

SIR ISAAC

'TWAS admirably said  
By one whose learned head  
Had long been wont to grapple  
With History's Page  
From age to age  
That when Eve plucked her un-  
permitted apple  
A fairer finer fruit  
Fell down with it to boot,  
All others in the garden much  
excelling,  
And this by grace  
Rolled on through Space  
Until it reached  
The orchard pleached  
At Woolsthorpe, Isaac Newton's  
country dwelling.  
This fortunate event  
The Master's musing bent  
To issue for immediate publi-  
cation

To presses hot for news  
His very latest views  
About the Laws of Universal  
Gravitation.  
His sparkling Latin gems  
Ignited Father Thames  
And set the Town a-roaring.  
At once in all the Taverns,  
The Coffee rooms and Caverns,  
The Ball-rooms and the Attics  
On Higher Mathematics  
The smart young set were poring,  
And many Courtiers reckoned  
As they spoke of James II  
We'd all be rather cross if he,  
For some peculiar reason  
Like Heresy or Treason  
Upheld the Unconvincibles.  
Who still reject the principles  
Of Isaac Newton's vital Work on  
Natural Philosophy. EVOE

# The Conquest of London

By BERNARD FERGUSSON

**N**OW if I were really enterprising, a South American brigadier instead of a mere British one, I could liven up summer training a lot. I know exactly how I would do it. At the end of our customary month on Salisbury Plain, when the annual ebb and flow of war between Eastland (capital, Tidworth, complete with oil-well) and Westland (capital, Longleat; admission 2s. 6d; apply Lord Bath) has ground to a halt, we normally drive back to Dover along a route laid down by Eastern Command. We could do better than this.

The route goes through Basingstoke, a name which is said, in *Ruddigore*, to teem with hidden meaning. We would make it teem all right. Rolling along up A30 we would come to the point where our Provost section, marking the route with their super little arrows, indicate that we should turn off, and shape our course through the Staff College country, the Canasta Belt, and the Winston Churchill country to the White Cliffs. *We ignore them* and, cocking a passing snook at the arrows, we roll on through Camberley and Staines and on to the Great West Road. Motorists and policemen may scowl at our adding to their traffic problems; but they will not appreciate that we have become sinister. On we go through Hammersmith and the long, dismal length of the Cromwell Road. Mark the time: it is 1230 hours.

At 1300 hours the column splits. The police at Hyde Park Corner, the policeman and top-hatted royal servant at the entrance to St. James's Park, the regimental policemen at Wellington Barracks, are a bit goggled-eyed as we sweep past in our various detachments; but we have caught up with and passed such telephone calls as may have been made about our progress so far, and the cordon is quickly in position. It includes the Admiralty, the Horse Guards, Downing Street, the Foreign and Colonial Offices, the Ministry of Defence; excludes Central Hall and Westminster Abbey and (to my Presbyterian regret) Church House; includes, for prestige reasons and as an awkward salient, the Houses of Parliament; includes the whole of Bridge Street (which gives us, among other things, Grindlay's Bank, Frank Owen, a post office and a tobacconist);

includes Scotland Yard, the Air Ministry, the War Office, and the Whitehall Theatre. We shall have to decide later which of these will be most appropriate for our E.N.S.A. shows. This gives us a compact perimeter. We shall have only one detachment, probably from a Highland battalion: it will take over the B.B.C.

There we are, then, at 1330: in position and facing outwards. The victory has been bloodless, and the potential defenders, to a man, are still at luncheon.

What happens next? Telephones ring, I suppose, in various clubs, and some of them are answered. But the Metropolis doesn't know what has happened to it until the first black-homburg-hatted Civil Servant tries to get back to his office from across the Park, and finds his way barred by a sentry (time: 1415). By the very nature of things a Civil Servant returning so early will be a junior one, whose respect for and uncertainty about precedent will more or less cancel out. So, in accordance with precedent, the first thing to ensue will be a breathing-space.

The next development will be that people will start trying to reason with one. By this time I shall be well beyond the point when I might be in a mood to be reasoned with. All prospects of a pension of any sort will by now have disappeared, let alone any prospect of what the Services know as the Golden Bowler. I shall certainly parley, because the conversations ought to be most enjoyable; my only regret will be my inability to be present at all the conversations between my sentries and the homburg-hatted. There will be some traffic jams of legendary dimensions all round my perimeter; more No. 11 buses will be visible in one postal district than ever before; but my perimeter will be intact.

"What to do?" as a Scandinavian bore of my acquaintance used to say in the middle of every story. What *would* the authorities do next? We haven't fired a shot; we are just standing there. We have put up a few barricades; I am sitting in Mr. Sandys' chair with my feet on Mr. Sandys' desk, and have had the Prime Minister's telephone switched through to me. One of my Pay Corps

lieutenants has taken over the Treasury, which is already (time: 1445) showing a marked improvement. All Cabinet Ministers under forty-five have been recalled to the Reserve by telegram, and they are the only people authorized to be admitted within the perimeter. Members of Parliament who happened to be lunching within the precincts of the House at the time of my *coup* have been compulsorily enlisted in the Whitehall Home Guard and are being drilled under a Highland sergeant-major on the Terrace. Non-established Civil Servants are being formed up under a C.Q.M.S. to receive two thousand years' pay from the Treasury as compensation for loss of employment, and will be ushered out through the perimeter sentries at Storey's Gate in time to catch their usual train.

Fleet Street can do its worst, including taking photographs of senior Civil Servants caught at their sandwich lunches. Whitehall is mine, the Houses of Parliament are mine; the Ministry of Defence is my wash-pot; over the B.B.C. I have cast out my shoe. I can't think what anybody can do about it. I can't see how I can lose.

Anyway, in these days when so many are "going out," I can't think of a better way of doing so. Certainly, to borrow from Mr. Eliot, it would be with a bang rather than a whimper.



"I'm sorry, madam, allow me to refund your money. He's absurdly class-conscious."

## The Black Puddings

By FRANK SHAW

"WHAT'S wrong with carrying a bucket of blood a few yards?" my Uncle asked me. "You'll do a lot worse than that before you die. It's better than carrying a matriculation certificate round half of the shops and offices in town, isn't it?"

My Uncle, badly hit by the cotton slump, was not one to do without money for his six cross-doubles and other investments just because no one would employ him. He had acted as an agent for Joey Connolly, the local bookie (who was also sidesman in our church, so that Uncle could annoy my Aunt by saying "When Joey comes round in his little white shirt you wouldn't know whether to put a penny in the box or a bettin'-slip"); during that phase I was in charge of the door leading into our

back entry to which the bettors came with their sixpences and shillings. Uncle, in the back-kitchen, would keep the "accounts," but we both had to give up this interesting occupation because my Aunt complained about us being always under her feet. As Uncle mixed his own bets in with the others he was not, in any case, making very much out of it.

Then, because I had, at church concerts, occasionally obliged by knocking out an old Irish tune with two fingers he tried to get his friends to buy piano lessons from me, he to be my manager.

I was in a constant state of panic, but I need not have worried. Even if my Aunt had permitted such a use of her mother's piano in the parlour—she had certainly kicked when he had put a card

in the window "Fortunes Told"—no one round our way was likely to be able to afford such luxuries at that time.

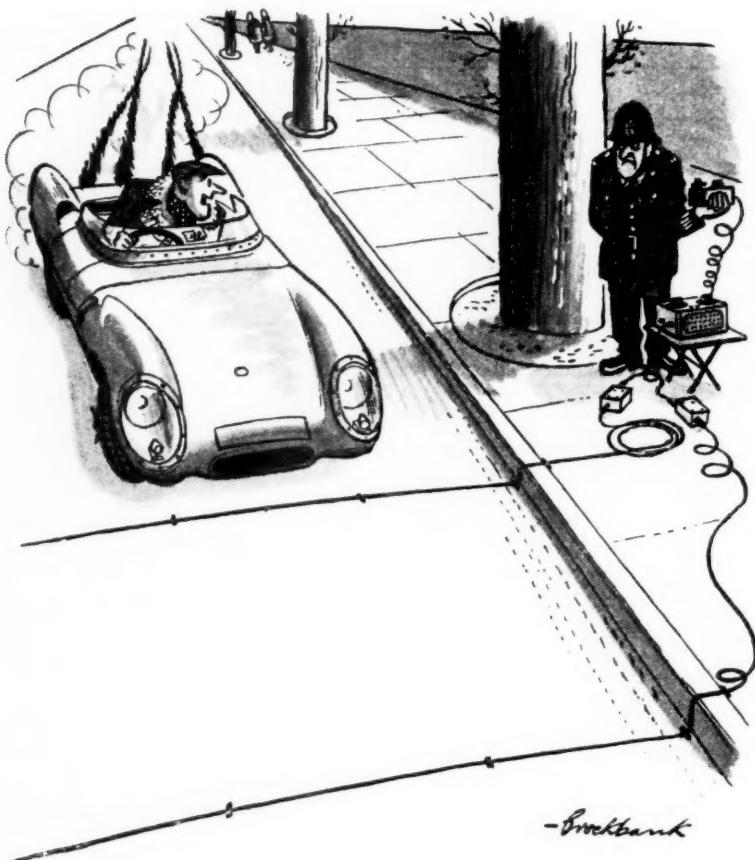
"You're very good with the chalks and pencils, Mike," he said to me one evening. "I'll bet those fellas down in the posh parts with those All Me Own Work things make many a bob. I've an old bowler somewhere'd be just the thing for . . ." Fortunately my Aunt came in at that moment. She always cast a damper on his money-raising schemes—"puts bad luck on 'em" is how he put it—and declared that she was well able to manage on the "dole" and a few pounds saved from the good years.

We certainly lived well enough, but, though I had not my Uncle's restlessness, I felt I too could do with an extra bit of money—fourpence for a packet of cigarettes, sixpence for a cinema matinée, a shilling for a dance. Ten shillings for a biscuit-coloured pair of Oxford trousers or anything like that I philosophically accepted as being beyond the bounds.

Next day my Aunt went out for the day as soon as she had given us our breakfasts. She and other members of the Women's Confraternity were going into town to buy the prizes for that night's whist drive, and they always had something to eat in town and made a long day of it. Mercifully my Uncle had already forgotten turning me into a pavement artist and began to recall how, before taking to the cotton trade, he had been apprenticed to a butcher. "An' I was known for me cooked meats all over Liverpool. None of 'em could come up to me for polonies and brawns and black puddings . . ."

His pipe paused on its way back to his mouth, there was a bright gleam in his little pale blue eyes.

"Black puddings! . . . Mike, into the back kitchen with you and get that boiler scoured out. Then get that new bucket from under the sink and off up with you to the abbatoyer in Gill Street. Look sharp, they close early of a Friday. You'll find Dinny Dolan third stall on the right. Give him this note." He tore the fly-leaf out of a library book and hastily scribbled a message. "Dinny's an old butty of mine, he'll give you what we want on the nod, only too pleased."



"Is this the thing that supersedes the radar trap?"

Dinny wasn't as pleased as all that, but he did give me a large bundle of guts and fat and skin and a ball of twine, asked me what standard I was in at school—I wasn't very big but I surely looked more than fourteen—and filled my bucket with thick luscious blood. By gum, I said to myself, I'll have to give it a great scrubbing after or my Aunt will have my life.

Bundle under my right arm, bucket dangling from my left, I set off back to our house up on Everton Hill, which was much more than my Uncle's "few yards" from the slaughter-house, nearer a mile. Fortunately there was a considerable number of back entries I could go along and not be observed.

The blood dripped on to my trouser-legs, the bundle kept slipping as I changed arms and it was not easy in those narrow lanes to get round the cabbage stalks, dead cats, discarded mattresses and fish boxes. I had to emerge into the cobbled streets from time to time and put up with the grins of big lads in jerseys and shorts who obviously should have been at school. Some knew me from before I went to college and shouted my name after me.

At one big crossing, just before I reached home, the unemployed dockers, swinging their hooks, were just beginning to assemble to lean on the hoardings and their remarks about "Here's Doctor Crippen" and that sort of thing completed my embarrassment and more of the blood tipped out.

Uncle did not complain. He had my Aunt's clothes-boiler going from a fire burning merrily under its opulent bulk. He was wearing a coarse apron of my Aunt's. Steam was pouring through the lid from the boiling water. Soon he had poured the blood in with the other ingredients and began to stir it. I thought of the opening scene of *Macbeth* in our Form play the year before. Presently I was doing the stirring, while he watched me, puffing his pipe; I would only stop to re-fuel the boiler fire.

It was not long before the house was filled with the smell. That to us was the hardest part, for neither of us could abide black puddings. But when we thought of all the money—! Already I was seeing myself as the partner of Uncle in a chain of cooked-meat shops, maybe even our own factory, absolutely

modern in ideas of hygiene and treatment of the staff.

"Get yer skates on, there," my Uncle suddenly yelled. "You'll be fallin' in the bloomin' boiler, standin' there dreaming."

Though the place still smelt—thank goodness my Aunt had a cold and never had a strong sense of smell anyway—it was really interesting after I had tipped the whole boiling mess out to see Uncle put it into skins and string the lot out into long black pearls. There must have been a good twenty pounds.

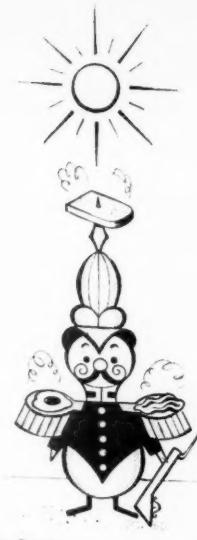
Uncle took the apron off and shoved it under a bundle of old clothes on the sofa. He changed into his best suit and placed his best bowler on his broad head. He braced his shoulders, patted his swelling chest, wrapped the puddings in some old *Echoes* and piled them into my Aunt's shopping-bag. Off he went.

I had hardly finished scouring out the boiler, cleaning the buckets, scrubbing the table, cleaning my trouser-legs and bits of crockery which had been splashed, and raking the fire out, when my Aunt came back, rather sooner than we had expected. If she'd been ten minutes sooner she'd have had my life. As it was I was sitting nonchalantly scanning one of my Uncle's handicap books.

She noticed nothing, but sniffed a bit and babbled on a lot about the whist drive and the day's shopping and, after giving me some toast and tea, she was getting into her astrakhan coat and off again.

"I've got to get there early, tell your Uncle, to lay the tables out and that. Tell him there's something tasty in the parcel on the table for his tea. I know he likes them." And she was off.

When Uncle came in, hiding the shopping-bag behind him till he knew the coast was clear, he was smiling broadly and there was a faint whiff of stout in the air. "So she's gone, has she? I did well, me son. Thought I'd have to go all over the place to get rid of them when who do I run into but Joey Connolly. Gives me ten shillings for the lot—'course, they're worth more than that but that's wholesale like—and a good one for Hurst Park to-morrow. I'll give you a bob for yourself in the morning. All work and no play—Be the holy farmer!" he suddenly exploded. "What's this?" He was looking at the pile of custards in the bag my Aunt had left.



ROY DAVIS

"She said you liked them."

"She's as thick as two short planks. She never remembers what anyone likes. Aw, well, good job I had a meat-pie at Duffy's. I'll make do with bread till she gets home"—for my Aunt runs the buffet at the whist drive and always brings us home tasty bits like sausage rolls and corned-beef sandwiches. "Pity we haven't got the money to send out for something."

He ate everything he could find, but looked up with nearly as much anticipation as I when at last she entered. She had a bigger bundle than usual.

"Youse are lucky, boys, to-night," she said. "We left the catering arrangements to ould Joey Connolly. And guess what the soppy ha'porth goes and does? He forgets it's Friday and brings in a dirty load of black puddings. Got 'em cheap, mind you, twelve shillings; but still, Friday. I took the lot. I know how you both like them and I've had a craving for one all evening. Even thought I could smell black puddings when I come in before. So it'll soon be Saturday, boys. Get the bread cut."

I was about to make do with the custards when she started to fry. Once more the smell permeated the house as my Uncle stamped off to bed and I hurried to the back-yard. As I passed her my Aunt was muttering into the pan: "This'll put youse up for a week!"



"RUSSIANS TEACH ARABS ENGLISH  
'Astonishing report' from Middle East'  
*The Scotsman*

Glass houses corner.

**N**O. 5 Pier, Miami. Rather like Southend, peanuts and all. Miami began here, but has spread. Now it is mainly hotels, cheek by jowl and the last word in contemporary architecture: "Kenilworth," "Royal," "Ivanhoe," "Sea View" and so on. Uptown that is. Downtown they diminish to motels and mere apartments, but the names become even more royal and British: "Princess Margaret," "London," "Queen Elizabeth," "Her Majesty," etc.



Chain gang cutting grass at side of highway between Key West and Miami. Drawn from memory, as we weren't allowed to stop or take photographs. We clocked 171 miles, and there were people fishing all the way.

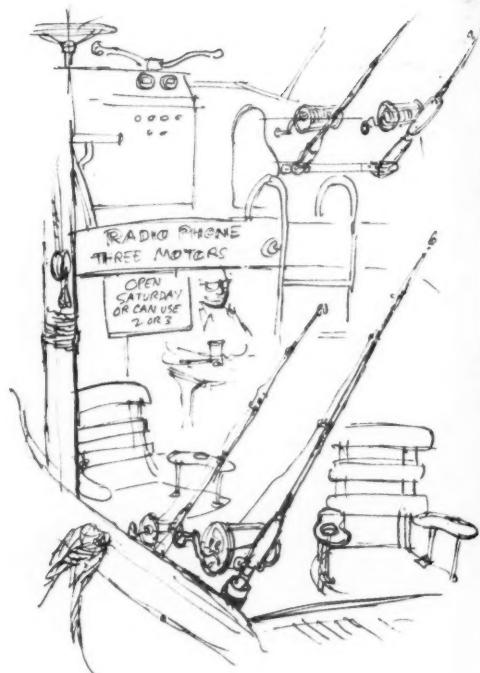
The "Mayflower" over on the Miami beach side. No joke here, but everyone solemnly interested in it as something historical and cultural. One thousand five hundred people go over it daily.



484



## MIAMI—SEA-SHORE AND



Pier 5. Deep sea fishing boat for charter.

Organic  
Flower



NDI By NORMAN MANSBRIDGE

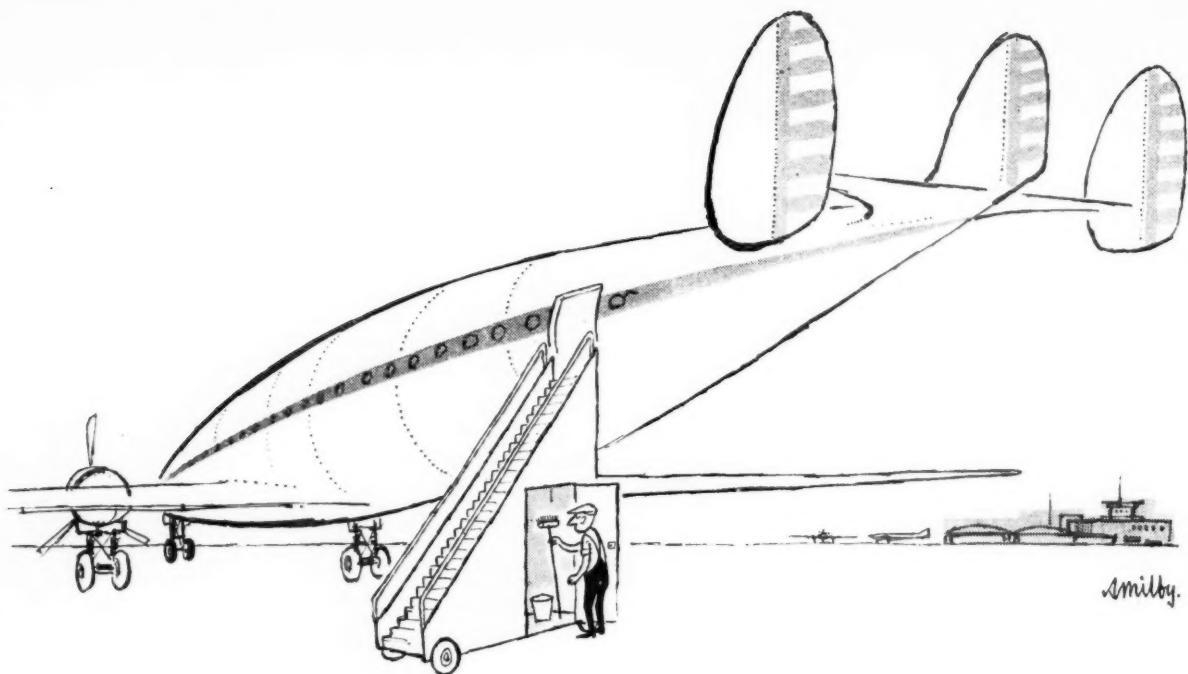
American National Bank, believe it or not, City of Miami. Coffee Hour 10—11 a.m. Customers are conducting business and being served with coffee and doughnuts. An organist is playing. Bank guards wander round. There's an adding-machine for the use of customers. Also old coach lamps and horse brasses.



Organist at work on "My Sweetie Went Away." Flowers lovely but artificial.



A robber-proof "walk-up" window. Teller talks through mike and controls steel drawer which opens with your money in it.



## Boots in the Corridor

By V. S. NAIPAUL

THIS happened on my first day in England. I know that was the first Wednesday in August, 1950; but I couldn't tell you in what boarding-house in London it happened. I spent only one night there. This story tells why I didn't stay longer.

I got to Waterloo after nine in the evening. A man with a British Council armband met me, took me to a restaurant where we dined well, then delivered me at the boarding-house. It smelled of cats and rag rugs and hadn't been decorated for years. But the brass stair-rods glittered.

There were two men in the room to which I was taken. One was vividly dressed. He came from Trinidad and his name was Johnson. He sat on the edge of his bed, swinging his legs, smoking, apparently completely settled in. The other was a fat young man from St. Vincent called Deschamps. His small eyes were red and frightened. His bed was surrounded by cheap new suitcases and bags: like myself, he had obviously only just arrived.

Deschamps was the smoothest man I have ever seen. His swelling round face

looked oiled. His kinky hair had been mown down and greased into the merest corrugations, black and glinting. The jacket of his smooth fawn tropical suit was buttoned at the middle and revealed nylon shirt above the button and a white triangle of nylon shirt below the button. I remember that triangle because I felt that if I pressed it he would squeak. Through the shirt I saw his perforated vest. A red silk tie rested without rumple on the shirt and followed the curve of his belly.

My suitcases added to the confusion in the room.

Johnson, cigarette between his lips, squinted against the smoke and asked me: "You just just come too?"

"Just just," I said.

He lay down flat on the bed. "You go get used to it."

Deschamps took out a bandana handkerchief from the breast pocket of his jacket, crumpled it between thick hairless hands and pressed it two or three times over his face. This made his eyebrows and moustache bristle a little. He looked at Johnson and asked in a high voice: "You been here long?"

"Three days," Johnson said.

Deschamps wiped his face again. Johnson asked me: "How the old place, eh? All right?" He spoke as though he had left Trinidad six years.

I reassured him.

He said "Good," stood up and began to undress.

Deschamps kept on crumpling his handkerchief. So far, because of the suitcases, I hadn't been able to move away from the door; now I turned and saw that it was full of things to read. The rules of the house—no washing, no cooking, no using of unauthorized electrical appliances, no playing of musical instruments, no encouraging of visitors—were typewritten in black and red, the red being used for phrases like *on no account* and *in advance* and *only with prior permission*. A large printed card told with illustrations how to revive the electrocuted—doubtless the users of unauthorized electrical appliances. Another typewritten sheet told in baffling detail how one should leave the house in case of fire. But my own favourite was a black-and-red sticker with a drawing by Fougasse and a verse:

*Switched-on switches and turned-on taps*

*Make happy Huns and joyful Japs.*  
"You reading it, eh?" Johnson said.  
"Show it to this man from St. Vincent.  
Go on, read it, Deschamps."

Deschamps remained on the edge of the bed and tried to read from there.

"These English people! Ha! Boy!" Johnson, only in pants now, began touching his toes. "They is real real diplomats."

I couldn't follow that.

Deschamps asked with some apprehension, "What you mean?"

"Eh, you ain't see it? Look on the door, Deschamps, and write home to St. Vincent and tell them what you see in London."

I followed Johnson's finger and saw a large sign on the door: PLEASE LEAVE YOUR BOOTS IN THE CORRIDOR. It hung above the other notices and I had missed it, the way one sometimes misses a newspaper headline.

Johnson, touching his toes and breathing hard, said "What you think that mean, Deschamps?"

"It ain't mean what it say?"

"Mean what it say? You ain't live in this country long enough, boy. These people is born diplomats. Diplo-mattist, that is what they is. Tell me, Deschamps, you see people in this country wearing boots?"

"I only just land here to-day, man."

"Is long enough. How much boots you see?"

Deschamps wiped his face. "I ain't see no boots."

"Well, look. I in this country *three* days now. Every day I looking for boots. I see any?"

"You see any?"

"See what? Man, I only seeing shoes everywhere. Brown shoes, black shoes, ox-blood, light tan and dark tan, strap shoes and buckle shoes, high heel, low heel, wedge heel and no heel. I ain't see a boot." Johnson placed his hands on his hips. "Please leave your boots in the corridor! And you see how polite they is into the bargain. Diplomacy, boy. Anthony Eden. Please leave your boots. Boots!" He sucked his teeth, stopped touching his toes and walked over barefooted to the wash-basin. "Watch this," he said, opening the door of a built-in cupboard next to the basin. "Look."

I saw: one large white enamel jug,

one pale-green enamel bucket with a dark-green handle, and three heavy earthenware pots, each with the same floral design though in a different colour—blue, green and red.

"Boots," Johnson said, and shut the cupboard door.

Deschamps said "Please leave those in the corridor?"

Johnson looked hard at me.

"Yes," I said. "Leave those in the corridor." And I began to laugh.

But Johnson went on seriously, "Mine is the green one. Naipaul have the blue one. Deschamps, yours is the red one."

Deschamps said "I didn't know they was so backward in this country, man."

We began to unpack. Deschamps committed the error of revealing a bottle of brandy in one of his suitcases. We fell upon it. He protested, muttering something about saving it up for the winter to keep out the cold. Johnson, speaking from three days' experience of the English climate, said that alcohol was the worst thing to fight the cold with; and I agreed with him. After about half an hour Deschamps stopped protesting.

When I woke up next morning Johnson was in bed, smoking. He held one hand over his eyes with thumb and forefinger pressing against his temples.

Deschamps, a medallion of St. Christopher around his neck, slept on in flannelette pyjamas. Presently he awoke. He sat up straight away, arranged the bed-clothes over his knees and passed his hands over his face. His hair was frizzier, his eyes smaller and redder. Blinking, he shook his head and complained of a headache. But he looked happy enough.

For some moments we said nothing. Early morning sounds came up to the room: a bus braking, then grinding away in low gear, hurried footsteps in the corridor, an underground train, the flushing of toilets.

A thought seemed to strike Johnson. He asked Deschamps in a tired friendly tone of voice: "What about your boots?"

"I leave mine outside," Deschamps said.

Johnson jumped out of bed, ran and opened the door of the cupboard. The red pot was missing.

"Oh God, Deschamps!" Johnson cried. "We was only joking last night, man."

"Only joking?" Deschamps's expression reverted to the melancholy of the previous night.

"Go and get back your boots," Johnson said. "Quick."

Deschamps threw off the clothes with a deceptive show of agility, wasted seconds looking for a thick dressing gown and wasted more seconds getting into it.

"Eh!" said Johnson. "But I did never think that these small islanders was so stupid."

Then Deschamps returned, shutting the door behind him and leaning on it. "All-you," he said, his voice squeaky with anguish, "all-you, my boots gone."

One by one, after breakfast, we were called down to the manageress's office. By midday we were all three looking for new rooms.



"Three Blind Mice and Baa Baa Black Sheep to take Shirl and Else to the Palais."



## Examinomania

By JEAN BÉLANGER

THE vast majority of us French people do not seek excitement in baccarat playing or betting on horses or going to *revues nues*. But I can safely say that we all do get a tremendous kick out of examinations. The French delight in having clever children—or in believing they are clever. So they are much more interested in exams than many other nations. How thrilled they are when their children are preparing for any exam!

For elementary school pupils there is the *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires*, taken at about thirteen. The thing creates quite a stir even in the remotest hamlets. To have succeeded is, for the boy or girl, a mark of honour. To have failed brands them as dullards, sots and block-heads, and even illiterate peasant parents then feel ashamed.

At the end of four years' attendance in secondary schools there is the B.E.P.C. The initials stand for *Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle*, not for *Bachelor of Elementary Practical Cribbing*, as a serious social research worker might suggest.

The "Baccalaureat" is the final exam for secondary school pupils. With that mixture of affection and contempt we reserve for some intimate friends it is popularly called the "bachot" or "bac." Both words also mean in French a ferry. But if the bac conveys people across a river, this "bac" conveys our children across we know not what to we know not where.

Having their boy or girl preparing for the B.E.P.C. or the bac means much for a French family. As weeks go by, tension mounts and excitement grows

in the homes. Lessons and preps are supervised by conscientious fathers and mothers, or by coaches . . . "My dear, our René's is a medical student, he helps him to polish up his maths, for 300 francs an hour." . . . "Oh yes . . . we have a nice old man—quite cheap too—who spent six months in Australia thirty years ago. Janine says she understands his English much better than she did her English mistress's at the state secondary school, before she had to leave—you remember how shameful it all was!—because she answered the Headmistress a little sharply." . . . "I quite agree, darling, these coaches are as good, I am sure, as those horrid *professeurs de lycées* who are so stuck up and expensive because they have high degrees and teach in state secondary schools. Would you believe it, my

dear, the Pontieux paid one of those *professeurs* nearly as much for Latin lessons as they did their tennis coach!"

Some weeks before the exams there are the documents to collect for the *dossiers*: photographs—"For Ginette I went to a very good photographer. He made her look quite glamorous, and I am sure one at least of these nasty *professeurs* on the board will give her extra marks so that he can see her at the *viva voce*—"curricula, testimonials etc. Some mothers take the lot to the school secretary, under pretence of asking if everything is in order—actually to draw him, or her, into some nice intimate talk about the exam. "Do you think the papers will be stiff this year? Because you see (*gloomily*) Louis was *not* in the right form, last year (*mildly indignant*) his physics master was *so* prejudiced against him. Then *of course* he failed. (*Perceptibly brightening*). This year why shouldn't they be given an extra hour if the paper is stiff? (*Confidentially*) Louis seems a bit slow, but he is quite clever in his way, you know. His father and I intend him to be a really *great* engineer . . ."

The day. If the boy is going to the B.E.P.C. exam his father or mother may go with the dear little one—a sturdy fourteen or fifteen—anxiously watch him being swallowed into the gloomy building, just like a condemned man, the condemned man actually feeling quite pleased at the idea of eating and drinking the sandwiches, buns, hot milk and coffee in a vacuum flask with which his school bag is crammed.

Waiting for him at home . . . There is a special rich lunch waiting for the return of the prodigy, or prodigal. Father has left his office earlier than usual, and is back at 12.30. The whole family is gathered, panting with excitement, their hearts throbbing at each noise on the landing. The moment the boy crosses the threshold questions are fired at him ("Was it difficult? Did you eat enough? What was it about? Did you crib?") by father, mother, elder sister, younger brother. ("How could I guess they were going to set such a paper? . . . No I couldn't, there was a nasty woman who watched me all the time!") Sister, who says it should have been easy, is immediately and indignantly cried down. The father has forgotten everything about his business

worries and gleefully joins in the chase for sensational information.

If all goes well there is the *viva voce* a week later. In every room of the examination building four or five examiners are sitting each behind a small table. To the anxious parents who peep in, they look like so many he-butchers and she-butchers complete with blood-stained aprons, grimly waiting for fresh victims to hack down.

Whatever the final results may be there is plenty of excitement in store for the whole family. If the little darling passed the B.E.P.C. there is a big *goûter* or lunch for family and friends. If darling Simone disgustingly failed again at the bac there is no finer opportunity for declaiming against (1) examiners, (2) masters in general—those people who do nothing during the holidays and still less during the school year, (3) rates and taxes, (4) Parliament. For days and weeks each member of the family will find food for talk and arguments in the honour which has been granted or refused them.

The chronic deficit of the French

budget might be fairly reduced if a full scale of complementary degrees was created. Just for the "bac" we could have: "normal bachelor," "superior bachelor," "extraordinary bachelor." On the other hand there would be "approximate bachelor," "tangential bachelor," "extrinsic bachelor," . . . and the corresponding degrees for the B.E.P.C. The fees, which would substantially enrich the French Treasury, would be gladly paid by the many families who would thus find many more honourable diplomas within their reach. For what is dearer to a man's soul than honour?



"I flew across the water to Dublin to-night for the world premiere of ROONEY . . . A film in which the hero is a muck-man employed by Dublin Corporation to empty the city's dustbins . . . John Gregson gives a splendid performance as the Casanova of the dustbins. You can measure how well he went down to-night . . . not a single member of the audience threw any garbage in his direction . . ."—*Daily Express*

Why not, if he was so good?

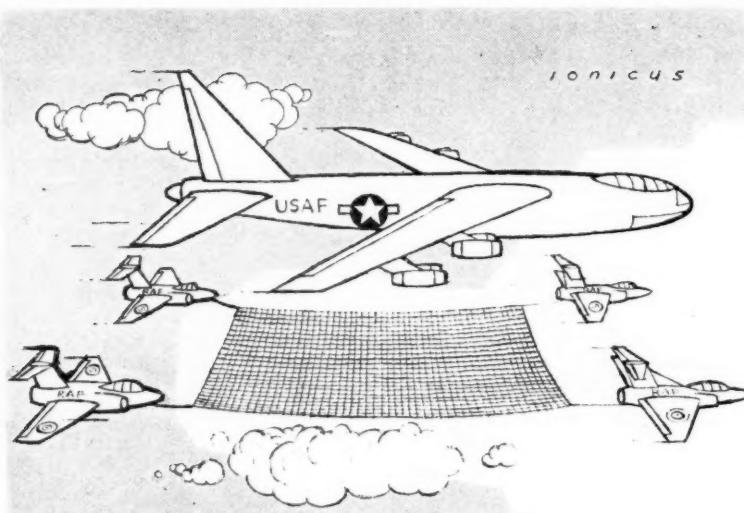
## CHESTNUT GROVE

J. H. Dowd contributed many drawings between 1913 and 1948. He is best remembered for his drawings of children and his illustrations for "At the Pictures."



"Ooh, Miss, what a lot of grass to keep off!"

[June 7 1939]



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Letters addressed to the Editor, unless specifically marked otherwise, may be considered for publication.)

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Before it is too late I hasten to warn any of your thirstier readers, who may be thinking of taking tickets to Moscow, that they should beware of the Soviet propaganda underlying your article "Playboy's Lay-by."

For, unless things have radically changed since my day, the Sobering-Up Station in Moscow provides its unwilling clients with something more than bath, bed and coffee, namely the application of a stomach pump which not only extracts all the good stuff out of the poor drunk but causes him intense discomfort.

A Western press correspondent who lived near the de-drunking station assured me that the language used by the luckless inebriates while being propelled to their night's lodging was a revelation even to those well versed in the inimitable richness of Russian vituperative powers.

Yours faithfully,  
WILLIAM SEEDS

St. James's Club, W.1

\* Sir William Seeds was British Ambassador to the Soviet Union 1939-40.

### AIR RAID

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—I have not the intelligence, writing ability or space to contradict the whole of Miss Rebecca West's essay in the "East is West" series, as I would like to do, so I must correct her on a fact. The first air raid was not in 1912 in the Balkan War. It was in 1846 on Venice when the Austrians dropped bombs on the rebellious Venetians from balloons.

Yours faithfully,

Huyton, Liverpool

F. SHAW

### FACE VALUE

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—Regarding Miss Rebecca West's article in the "East is West" series we are invited to accept Mr. Khrushchev on his "face value." Since the writer quotes from *Macbeth* may I respectfully imitate her:

"There is no art  
To find the mind's construction in the face;  
He was a gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust."

Thus ignorantly prophesying the murder which follows. Yours faithfully,  
Newton Abbott F. AUSTIN

### AVOGADRO

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—I should like to point out to Sir E. Voe that Avogadro is best known for his formulation of a hypothesis—not a law. A law differs from a hypothesis in that it is a statement involving no theories but concerning experimental data only. A hypothesis, on the other hand, is a theory conceived for the express purpose of explaining a series of laws. Avogadro's hypothesis refers to a concept that at present is incapable of direct verification by empirical methods. It is only when the number of molecules in a mass of gas can be directly counted, and it is found that under the same conditions of temperature and pressure equal volumes of gases do indeed contain the same number of molecules, that this hypothesis will become a law.

Yours faithfully,  
Chingford, E.4 BARRY T. JACKSON

### RURAL DEANERIES

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—The "lawn of a rural deanery" referred to by one of your contributors is a solecism. A "rural deanery,"

being a subdivision of a diocese, cannot have a lawn and the rural dean does not live in a deanery but in the parsonage of the parish of which he is incumbent. On the other hand there are a very few parishes called "peculiars" whose incumbents are "deans" and their houses "deaneries." Thus Bocking (Essex) and Hadleigh (Suffolk) are both "deaneries" and to make confusion worse confounded the title of "Dean of Bocking" is shared by the incumbents of the two parishes.

Yours faithfully,  
R. A. MINTER  
Quy Vicarage, Cambridge

### BOOING

To the Editor of Punch

SIR,—I wish to protest against the inference in your *Punch* Diary paragraph "Crabbed Youth" that booing in the theatre is organized by the Gallery First Nighters. As President of the Gallery First Nighters' Club and as the most regular "first nighter" in London, I feel entitled to inform you that your charge could not be further from the truth. Similar accusations have been made against this Club ever since it was formed 62 years ago. There seems to be a danger that by these monotonous repetitions some people are beginning to believe the lie. It is widely known in theatrical circles that my club is strenuously opposed to booing, organized or spontaneous. The result of this bad-mannered custom is usually that the play receives far more publicity than it deserves, when it would be kinder and more effective to let it quietly disappear.

Yours faithfully,  
LESLIE BLOOM  
Gallery First Nighters' Club, W.1



## Toby Competitions

### No. 11—Tales Out of School

**C**OMPETITORS are invited to submit an anecdote that throws a critical or revealing light on their schooldays. Limit: 120 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive *Toby* bookmarks. Entries (any number, but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom right-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, April 18, to *Toby* COMPETITION No. 11, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

### Report on Competition No. 8 Boffinland.

Competitors were asked to give the potted biography of the inventor of a new science.

On the whole, the inventors of the more ingenious sciences had the less ingenious biographies and *vice versa*. There were comparatively few entries that were good all through, though competitors produced quite a number of isolated ingenuities. One horrible entry, disqualified as not being a potted biography at all, had a TV vivisectionist producing monstrosities to serve man. This evil invention ended, "His secret dream?—A warrior caste with fangs." One professor, having invented the Study of the Invention of Sciences, went on to invent the Study of the Study of the Invention of Sciences. Other bright ideas were artificial sound barriers to confine the sound of radios to one room, Post-Occupational Therapy Normalizing, a man who invented a machine to forecast the future and then went in fear of his life because he had destroyed Hope, a device that accentuated the smell of cellulose covered metal so that drivers looking for parking space could head the other way, and "Seentivision" that operated on Chanel 1.

The winner of the framed *Punch* original is:

EXCUBITOR  
OFFICERS' MESS  
16 BATTALION R.A.O.C.  
BICESTER

EVENLODE, Lord. Andrew Gregory Dennison, b. Odessa 1901 (Andrei Denissov). Refugee Germany 1917. Ph.D. Heidelberg; research in physical chemistry. Refugee England 1936. Readership in History of Science at Birmingham; publications on properties of matter. 1946 founded School of Neo-Alchemy in Oxford; first Paracelsus Professor. 1948 Laboratory assistant accidentally converted into thermoplastic; cautioned. 1951 Platinum first successfully transmuted to cupro-nickel: F.R.S.; Knighthood (Services to Science). 1955-61 researches in co-operation with Royal Mint. 1962 Raised to peerage; Director of Bank of England; return to Gold

Standard. 1964 U.S. debt repaid. 1970 Transubstantiated into porphyay in experimental mishap: St. Paul's.

Among the runners-up were:

DR. J. R. BOVIE and ICONOGRAPHY. Iconography (1951): the science of measuring nerve tremulations produced by "Angst," the "icon" being that particular nerve reaction stimulated by mental-physico emotion evoked by "Angst." BOVIE, JAMES RONINGTON: British scientist, born in Solihull, 1908; educated Dudley Municipal High School; first in Medicine, Edinburgh University (1926-9) where he was awarded the Shantih Prize for the thesis: "The Psychological Disorders Occasioned by the Refusal to Doubt"; Ph.D. (Cantab.) 1932, for his Study of Central European Daism; 1939-45 attached to U.S.A.A.F., published "Combat Fatigue and American Self-Confidence"—*B.M.J.* 1947; international honours—Arthur Miller Lectures, Ohio State University, 1955; Reith Lecturer-Elect, 1959.

J. D. DUTTON, 55 Wych Elm Road, Hornchurch, Essex.

AN UNNAMED SCIENTIST  
1893—Born of humble parents.  
1900—Met Professor of Social Anthropology at Prague University.  
1901 1907—Paid weekly visits to professor's house to play balalaika trios with professor's daughters. Studied professor's habits, e.g. leaving his pipe in the soap-dish, knocking over maid every evening as he drove bicycle into back of house.  
1914—Wrote thesis at college: "Effect of anthropology on the Human Brain."  
1930—Became second balalaika at "Die Lebensraum"—Vienna night-spot.  
1958—Delivered momentous lecture at Harvard: "Relative Anthropology—a modern science. The study of social habits of anthropologists and their place in society."  
1958—*Time* magazine wrote "Psychopathic Einstein from 'Lebensraum'."  
1959—Died a humble parent.

Mr. R. T. OLDHAM, 24 Hollins Lane, Accrington, Lancs.

### WILMER POGSON

(to tune of "Davy Crockett")  
Born in a test-tube in the Cavendish,  
To emulate his Dad was his one wish.  
(His father was a don, across from Yale,  
And Wilmer was the first artificial male.)

Wilmer—Wilmer Pogson,  
Founded Bintology.

He was a genius just perverted,  
Father saw the danger; 'twas not averted.  
Father made men with a scientist's  
pleasure,

Wilmer made girls and made 'em to  
measure.

Wilmer—Wilmer Pogson,  
Founded Bintology.  
Gained the approval of the undergrad;  
Solved a problem that was driving them  
mad.

Before the advent of Bintology,  
Men out-numbered girls—eleven to three.

Wilmer—Wilmer Pogson,  
Saviour of Cambridge males.  
C. DEAN, Corpus Christi College,  
Cambridge.

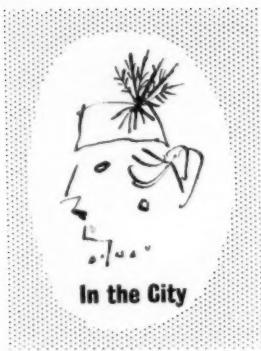
SIR ARCHIBALD SCROUNGE. Born Rawtenstall, 1921. Assistant Registrar, University of Blackpool, 1948-58. During this period perfected the Scrounge formula,\* foundation of modern Donometry. President, University of Transatlantica, 1958-62. Vice-Chancellor, University of Watford since 1962. Chairman Royal Commission on Personnel, 1965. Editor, *Donometrika*, since 1959. Publications: *Minor Henrician Poetry* (1951); *Donometry* (1958); *Frontiers of Donometry* (1961); *Donometry after Ten Years* (1968).

\* Expressing suitability for academic employment as the product of figure A, (representing publications, weighted for length and obscurity), and figure B, (representing factors of personality, such as raconteur-ship, television potentiality, alcoholic capacity, etc.)

J. D. HARGREAVES, 146 Hamilton Place, Aberdeen.

The other runners-up, who will also receive *Punch* bookmarks, are: J. M. Crawford, Norlands, Stonehill Road, Chertsey; Mrs. Fennell, 129 Yarborough Road, Lincoln; A. Henderson, 17 Chapel Court, Edinburgh 9; J. M. Trebles Cott., Kingston, Kingsbridge; D. M. Nathan, 7 Cromford Way, New Malden; J. B. O'Keefe, 19 Corelli Road, Blackheath, S.E.3; Henry P. Rado, 10 Thayer Street, W.1; 2/Lt. A. Schouvaloff, SHAPE Provost Company, British Field Post Office 6.





### Over the Counter

**F**INANCIAL aesthetes and fastidious City men have recently been horrified by the suggestion that the Stock Exchange may open "branch offices"—some vulgarians have called them "shops"—at which stocks and shares could be bought over the counter just like a book of stamps at any post office and—egad—without even the formality of an introduction to a firm of stockbrokers. This delicacy is becoming outdated.

The main flow of the national income is now that which runs into the weekly pay packets of highly paid industrial workers. For most of them the only form of "investment" is the weekly filling of the football pool coupon. An investigator inquiring recently into the spending and saving habits of a large sample of families found one household in the Midlands in which three wage earners brought home a combined net pay packet of nearly £60 a week. "How much of this do you save?" "Nothing," was the answer. "But I don't mind telling you that we are beginning to find it difficult to spend it all." Here are the potential clients of future Stock Exchange shops.

Much has been, and is being, done to popularize investment. The unit trusts have done good pioneer work in this direction. The Bank Insurance Trust group is now making its "Scotbits" available over the counters of all Scottish banks, north and south of the border. Within the last few days the managers of Domestic Investment Trust, which is in the National Group, have published a plan which provides for the purchase by monthly instalments of a "share in the shares" of more than 100 well-known British companies. These monthly payments can now be made over the counter at any of the 2,150 branches of the Midland Bank. Other groups including the Municipal and General and the Orthodox are also operating regular savings schemes.

In this popularization of the investment habit, the banks could and should do more than they have recently done. To open a bank account is the first step to becoming an investor, a member of a property-owning democracy. The banks are still somewhat afraid of a too sudden burgeoning of the banking habit, fearing that too many small accounts would add an unconscionable load to the work being done by hard-pressed staffs, particularly on Fridays and Saturdays. It is, however, the small uneconomic account of to-day that can become the big profitable account of to-morrow. A private member's bill, now before the House, would make possible the amendment of the Truck Acts and the payment of wages by cheque. This should open the

door to a wide extension of the banking habit and should also check the regular coshings of cash-carrying wage clerks.

Perhaps the most valuable contribution of all to the popularization of investment and the creation of a shareholding democracy must come from the Chancellor of the Exchequer who now takes a 2 per cent cut on every Stock Exchange deal through the stamp duty that has to be paid on transfers. This used to be 1 per cent until it was raised by the Socialist Chancellor, Mr. Hugh Dalton, in 1947. To reduce the duty to its former level would cost the Chancellor a paltry £12 million. Given all the advantages that could be secured by its reduction it should be a high claimant for a place in the imminent Budget.

LOMBARD LANE



### Before the Flood

**S**ALMON quit the ocean for the rivers only when the rivers are in flood. This year the floods came very late. Week followed week without so much as a shower to swell the waters. At the fishing inns anglers who had put aside other affairs to enjoy the cream of the early season were compelled to idleness, to bridge, to golf, or to visiting cathedrals. The salmon, meanwhile, were concentrated in estuaries all round the coast, getting wise to the perfidy of the human race and developing un-welcome tendencies towards caution.

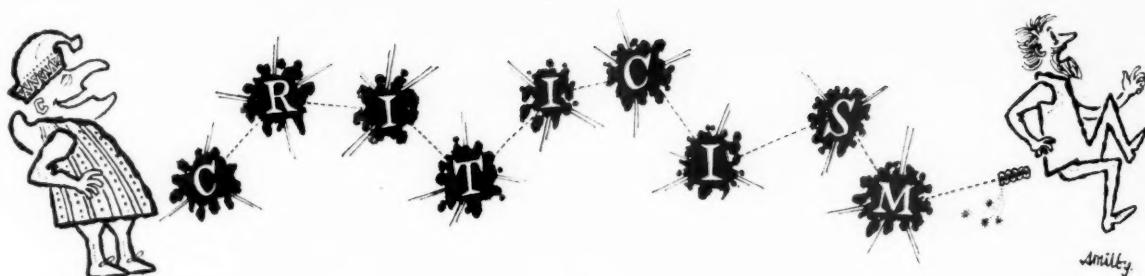
Fishermen, like other confidence tricksters, prefer to encounter their victims as strangers in a strange land. Salmon are in this position only for a limited period. They arrive home after four years at sea, having left their native rivers as inexperienced smolts, and having in the meantime become individuals of substance with the cock-sure outlook which travel produces. Like other mariners in the first days after making landfall, they are apt to be attracted by anything dressed in silk and feathers. But a few encounters with artificial fly or spinning bait are enough

to teach them not to rise without careful thought.

Therein lies the reason why men of mature age, careful of their comfort at other times, are ready to abandon wife and home and to wade chest deep in icy torrents, to endure downpours and Arctic winds, and to pay for these privileges at a figure which can seldom be recouped even by selling the catch at 15/- per pound. The salmon is a remarkable creature to bring about so marked a change in the habits of solid citizens. Its own habits are remarkable too. The wonder is not that the salmon, like the fishermen, should be found waiting for the flood but that it should enter its home river in springtime at all.

The race of salmon, more closely studied than any other fish, keep their secrets well. Where they go when they put to sea for their four years of prosperity under Neptune's trident, nobody knows. That they return to breed, everybody knows. But why they should return in March and April and thus commit themselves to spending eight months in fresh water before their journey is consummated in the midst of the following winter, even the salmon themselves may not know. Willingly they exchange the freedom of the seas for some cramped pool in a narrow Devon combe or rocky Highland river, there to withstand on empty stomachs (they do not feed after leaving the sea) a long siege by fishermen. That they incur the risk, and that most of them do in fact withstand it, is responsible both for the continuation of their species and for the cohorts of distinguished men waiting for the flood, and becoming testy when the flood is late.

WILSON STEPHENS



## BOOKING OFFICE

### Author as Critic

**By Way of Sainte-Beuve.** Marcel Proust. Translated by Sylvia Townsend Warner. Chatto and Windus, 25.

**I**N this excellent translation one is puzzled only by the title. If the book was named in the original French *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, why not call it *Against Sainte-Beuve* in English? This study is levelled against Sainte-Beuve. It is a most devastating attack on him. Why suggest, therefore, that Sainte-Beuve is merely the vehicle for expressing certain literary opinions?

*Contre Sainte-Beuve* was begun by Proust in 1908 as an article for *Le Figaro*, but like everything else he touched it soon became enormously elaborated, eventually growing into a volume. "Vatelle won't take Sainte-Beuve, which no doubt will remain unpublished," Proust wrote. "It is too long, four or five hundred pages." Miss Townsend Warner justly comments on the energy of a writer who cannot remember off-hand whether he has written four hundred or five hundred pages of a book.

The final result, to be read here together with various short essays on George Eliot, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Goethe, and others, including several painters, can be enjoyed for two different reasons.

First, the critical opinions are of the greatest interest. Sainte-Beuve, perhaps France's greatest academic critic of the nineteenth century, believed that criticism could be treated as "a science." He also believed that a critic's first duty was to spot contemporary talent. Unfortunately he wasted a great deal of time with nonentities—as Proust points out—and he was also not the foremost to recognize many of the names posterity now acclaims. He disapproved of Balzac's invention of the *roman fleuve*, he disliked Stendhal's novels, he was patronizing to Baudelaire, he consigned Gérard de Nerval to obscurity . . .

On these and other subjects Proust gives Sainte-Beuve a tremendous knocking-about, incidentally expressing a great many of his own views about life and letters, notable not only for their subtlety but also for their humour and common sense. Academic critics are always with us, and it would do some of them a great deal of good to ponder some of these comments.

However, there is another aspect of this book that will fascinate all interested in how Proust's own great novel came into being, and in the literary vitality and iron discipline of this extraordinary man.

Before he wrote *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, Proust had already written—and put

### NOVEL FACES



XI—GRAHAM GREENE

*Both saints and sinners teeter on hell's brink:  
The gangster genuflects: priests take to drink.*

away as unsatisfactory—*Jean Santeuil*, a matter of 340,000 words, or about four times the length of the average novel. This book tried out his method; and many incidents and characters, some considerably altered, some scarcely altered at all, appeared eventually in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*.

Now *Contre Sainte-Beuve* is by no means all "straight" criticism. Large sections of the book are devoted to accounts of imaginary people the author knows, whose approach, for example, to Balzac is described as an extension of Proust's critical method. The Guermantes are introduced for the first time, and an early sketch for Monsieur de Charlus appears. The author's brother is sketched in as a child. In short this is a second attempt at expressing the material he had within him; an attempt also doomed, in one sense, to failure.

Finally, in *A la Recherche*, like one who has a third try at the high jump, in which he puts every ounce of his energy, we see him clear the cross-bar magnificently. The absorbing point about the earlier books is to observe what material he later decided to abandon, and what modifications he made, the better to express the realities of his own life.

For example, Proust has been taken to task for representing himself in *A la Recherche* as an only child. The few words about his brother in *Contre Sainte-Beuve* immediately convince one that he was right to abandon this additional complication of presenting the Marcel of his novel; and that it was no mere egotism that caused this final choice. There are innumerable small points to be noted of this kind, and also the building up and dramatization of personages and situations which are at first only lightly suggested.

There are all kinds of minor points in *By Way of Sainte-Beuve* which are to be enjoyed: for example, a terrific side-kick at Romain Rolland for *Jean Christophe*. Everyone at all interested in French literature must read it. I suppose it was too much to hope for an



index, as such things are unknown in France, but it would have been a great help, and—as the song in *My Fair Lady* says—would have set a good example.

ANTHONY POWELL

**The Mark of the Warrior.** Paul Scott. *Eyre and Spottiswoode*, 15/-

Despite the power of the writing and the absorbing narrative I felt, very reluctantly, that this novel was an honourable failure. In the Burmese retreat a major has a subaltern who possesses the fighting spirit and sense of the jungle he lacks himself and who is killed in a skirmish at a river crossing. Later, when the major is appointed to a training school in India, he finds the subaltern's younger brother there. Relations are tense until, on an elaborate tactical exercise, the situation in which the elder brother died is re-enacted.

Leadership and the relation of military virtues and vices to other moral codes are studied with hard seriousness; but the argument and the story are not quite fused. The design is too formalized. This is to apply high standards to a novel that is an outstanding piece of description of characters, places and action; but Mr. Scott looks like being the best novelist in this tradition since Conrad and he deserves to be free from easy praise.

R. G. G. P.

**Julio Jurenito.** Ilya Ehrenburg. Translated by Anna Bostock, with Yvonne Kapp. *Macgibbon and Kee*, 18/-

This picaresque novel (originally published in Russia thirty-six years ago, before the author's work assumed its present propagandist tone, and modelled on the satires of Voltaire and Fielding) recounts the odyssey, between 1913 and 1921, of the eponymous Mexican "Teacher," who occupies himself "by preference, with destruction, subversion, infiltration and other purifying operations," believing freedom to be an abstraction, "and in our day a most harmful one." His disciples include a Bible-punching, brothel-owning American promoter, a French *rentier*, a Tolstoyan Russian emigré, an Italian vagabond, a Stuttgart student, a Negro pageboy, and the author himself.

Their various adventures are amusing enough, but suffer from the coincidental conventions of this type of fiction (when they are captured by the Germans at Verdun the officer inevitably turns out to be the student Schmidt). It is ironical, also, to reflect how much resemblance exists between Jurenito's activities, as outlined above, and present-day Soviet policy: though, in Russia just after the revolution, the "Teacher" is in turn made a commissar, condemned to death, sent to a concentration camp, and finally murdered by a bandit for his boots.

J. M-R.

**The Rainbow Has Seven Colours.** Nadia Legrand. *Macmillan*, 12/6

The thoughts of seven people each dwelling on their association with a certain woman, describing her, assessing her character, form the shape Nadia Legrand gives to her second novel. There is no clearly revealing contribution, the reader may compare one person's picture with another's, but, as the publisher's blurb admits, "mystery remains." Superficially—Florence Sinclair, a widow with a small daughter, a pleasant flat in Paris, many friends, and easy success as an author, seems no harder to understand than any other human bundle of contradictions. A whisper accuses her of being her publisher's mistress, his foolish, sickly wife is destroyed by jealousy: the seven who report on the affair leave the reader with no clear conviction save that Florence must have been very charming to meet. Finally the reader, knowing much but not quite enough, may lose patience, longing to shake the author and ask her what is what—she alone knows.

B. E. S.

**The Steadfast Man.** Paul Gallico. *Michael Joseph*, 12/6

Included in this life of St. Patrick are his two authentic writings, the *Confession* and the *Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus*, the one defending his actions, the other tearing a tremendous strip off a marauding Welsh chieftain. From them emerges a wonderfully vital character, but beyond the bare facts of his kidnapping to Ireland as a boy, his escape to France, and his return to Ireland as a missionary little

is known of him except his astonishing feat of lasting conversion of a pagan people. The rest is inextricably wrapped up in the accumulated legend of a highly imaginative race.

Perfectly honest about these large gaps, Mr. Gallico rejects the druidical picture of an Old Testament Patrick blasting his way through a hostile country, which is in no way borne out by the two documents; but he then attempts to build up a biography by pointing to the most probable of the legends. This method of supposition is far from satisfactory, and less so for his very sentimental approach to Ireland.

E. O. D. K.

**The Sicilian Vespers.** Steven Runciman. *Cambridge*, 27/6

Here is thirteenth-century history after the old pattern with the rather stupid ambitions of a few exalted families—Anjou, Hohenstaufen, Aragon, spacious genealogies appended—working themselves out as conquests and revolutions, countrysides ravaged to win an empty kingship for an unloved overlord, celestial thunders of papal excommunication switching on and off at the behest of an earthly monarch, daughters or sisters given in marriage in part-payment for a province or a troop of mercenaries. All the world took it for granted then and apparently so does Mr. Runciman now. The famous massacre that gives its title to the volume he sees as a legitimate act of patriotic warfare notable mainly as marking a turning-point in the welter of City-state bickerings, sham crusades, and Guelph and Ghibelline faction-fights preceding conscious nationhood.

Regarded as an extra portion of Gibbon this is excellent play, superbly documented, but the pawns and pieces so deplorably lack human quality that one reads with relief of the one tyrant who risked his empire to take a day off for hunting.

C. C. P.

**The Royal Succession.** Maurice Druon. Translated by Humphrey Hare. *Hart-Davis*, 15/-

This is the fourth and last novel in the first series of *The Accursed Kings*, Monsieur Druon's extraordinary sequence about the French monarchy in the early fourteenth century. He makes intractable material from genealogy and the laws regulating accession to the throne gripping. How it is done I simply cannot see; but what might seem packed with similar names and separate facts when dipped into is exciting when read continuously, and the excitement never flags.

Monsieur Druon realizes, as Dumas realized, the importance of the struggle for power, of political history. Though he never ignores the condition of the people or the growth of capital, his characters are moved primarily by ambition. It is not so very long ago since history was being taught impersonally;

perhaps the war changed all that. History in Monsieur Druon's unsentimental eye is a mêlée with glittering prizes to be held until a stronger takes them. It may not be an attractive view of the past and it is certainly a partial one; but it is a view that produces wonderful narrative.

R. G. G. P.

## AT THE BALLET

*Hamlet* (COVENT GARDEN)

THE clue to Helpmann's ballet *Hamlet*, which has been brought back into the repertory during the stay of its choreographer as guest artist with the Royal Ballet, is in the moody prince's famous soliloquy,

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.

The single scene to Tchaikovsky's music is not a condensed, balletic version of Shakespeare's tragedy but rather a projection of the mingled conscious and subconscious thought of the slain Hamlet whose deathly visage we see as, at the rise of the curtain, it lolls from the bier being borne slowly into darkness.

In his last moments of life events and persons are jumbled and distorted in dream-like memory. All would be unrecognizable and unintelligible but for knowledge of Shakespeare's play which Helpmann takes for granted.

Sometimes grotesque and sometimes poetical, the *dramatis personae* succeed each other and mix their actions and even their personalities. Hamlet himself, pale and haggard, is in the midst of the phantasmagoria. The Grave-digger (Ray Powell) has become a macabre jester howling Yorick's skull across the stage. Ophelia (Anya Linden) becomes in a moment the Player Queen, and the Ghost of Hamlet's father (Leslie Edwards) is somehow the Player King. The other characters play their fevered parts inconsequently.

Of pure dance there is little, but the dancers who, with the exception of Helpmann, are newly come to this remarkably imaginative work show ability to mime and act which was to me no less impressive than when the ballet was first done in 1942.

Helpmann repeats his poignant performance with wonderful power. His sole disadvantage in the eyes of some may be that he is no longer a young man. Ballet-goers are not accustomed, as playgoers are, to making the allowances which throughout the theatre's history since Shakespeare's day has enabled mature actors to carry off his great romantic roles with resounding success. In ballet, above all the arts of the theatre, the accent is on youth. But Hamlet is no Romeo, and Helpmann magnificently relives the bitterness and sorrow of his few disordered and unhappy years.

The ballet though no longer an *avant-garde* work retains its force of originality. Its impressive unity is emphasized by its ending as it begins—a beam of light falling in the encircling gloom on the backward drooping head of the dying Hamlet as his body is borne away into the shadows.

The scenery, in a sort of nightmarish Baroque style, and handsome Renaissance dresses, designed by Leslie Hurry, do a lot towards creating the dream-like atmosphere.

C. B. MORTLOCK

## AT THE PLAY

*Half in Earnest* (BELGRADE, COVENTRY)

ON the morning after the first night there were still vibrations of excitement in the air. Women sweeping up the cigarette ends (and with them a blur of fluffed pile from the new fitted carpets) chattered on a note of pleasurable hysteria, conscious of humble participation in an occasion. Outside, the clamour of commercial Coventry went on. The Co-op across the road was a mass of string bags; demolition gangs banged away at the derelict factory next door—where a garden is to be—and the traffic went grinding past in Corporation Street. In the middle of it all stood the new theatre, offering a quarter of a million pounds' worth of defiance to materialism, television and other enemies of the mind. Somewhere, with outrageous aptness, a carillon played "He who would valiant be . . ."

The theatre is not everything that the man of the theatre would have it. There are mild mutterings about the size of the paint-shop; is there enough cloakroom accommodation? And there could have been more room backstage. In the course of building, the original estimate was rocketed by rising costs; there had to be small prunings. Nevertheless, here is a lovely theatre; comfortable, spacious, acoustically unfaultable, with an electrical switchboard—console is the word now—which does all but actually devise its own lighting-plot, and decorative accessories in the way of chandeliers and statuary which are fresh and good without being ugly and pretentious. There is room for the audience to saunter in the intervals, and the same voice that calls the actors in their dressing-rooms (none of that old-fashioned pounding and bawling at the door) invites us back to our seats with a clear indication of the time left to finish our drink. All this is done from the stage manager's portable cue-desk, in appearance half adding-machine half piano-accordion, behind the scenes. To the layman, at any rate, it seems a perfect little theatre, and lacks nothing but some assurance that Coventry, having given it birth, will cherish it with loving care.

A musical version of *The Importance of Being Earnest* has struck some as an odd choice for the opening production; but to have marked the occasion with Beckett or Brecht would have been all too obviously uplifting; whereas an



[*Half in Earnest*

Cecily Cardew—STEPHANIE VESS  
John Worthing, J.P.—BRIAN JOHNSON  
Algernon Moncrieff—BRYAN JOHNSON  
John Worthing, J.P.—BRIAN REECE

Agatha Christie could be mere catch-penny. Perhaps, after all, something never tried before or elsewhere was right, and at least would not be mistaken for a statement of policy: no one is going to groan that the Belgrade proposes itself as the home of musical versions of Oscar Wilde.

Mr. Vivian Ellis's problem was to add to Wilde without distorting or obliterating him. In the main he has succeeded. To the *Importance*-lover it is something of a shock for the curtain to rise immediately on song ("Don't Touch the Cucumber Sandwiches"), but a moment's thought shows that this was the only way. To start with a page of Wilde undressed and then plunge into the score would have been like hitting a man looking the other way. As it is, the two-faced convention is established at once, and by the second act is acceptable enough to make us regret that Chasuble and Prism are denied a number all to

#### REP SELECTION

Bromley, *Housemaster*, until April 12. Perth, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, until April 12. Salisbury Arts Theatre, *Teahouse of the August Moon*, until April 12. Playhouse, Nottingham, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, until April 12.

themselves. Mr. Ellis might have fused the old and the new more successfully if his words and music had smacked of the late 'nineties instead of the early 'thirties; this, incidentally, would have relieved us of some of the less excusable rhymes (Bunburying with Numbering), and of a would-be hit entitled "Foolish Love" which intrudes painfully. But, to be fair, the excisions are clean and the surviving matter untampered with. Sometimes the missing lines appear in a metrical version, and it took a bold rhymester to versify the confusion of names and identities at the beginning of Act Three. The muffin scene has gone . . . and not even a song to take its place.

The casting was not of the happiest. Miss Marie Lohr, though a gruff, commanding Bracknell, failed as a Gorgon, and Mr. Brian Reece and Miss Pamela Jordan somehow missed the essential top-drawerfulness of John Worthing and Gwendolen. Mr. Bryan Johnson's Algernon sang superbly but acted less so. It was Miss Stephanie Voss, as Cecily, who saved the day, getting all possible fun out of Wilde, and all possible music out of Ellis. This is an enchanting young actress, the more so because she doesn't seem to know it.

Three sumptuous sets were provided by Mr. Peter Rice, and Mr. William Blears handled the small orchestra with discreet verve. The direction of Mr. Bryan Bailey, who comes to Coventry on the tide of his achievements at Guildford, did all that could be desired; to mix the

music and the play, rather than present the two in parallel, was a stern challenge, and intelligently met.

#### Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Witty escapes into ancient worlds *The Rape of the Belt* (Piccadilly—18/12/57) and *Lysistrata* (Duke of York's—15/1/58). For those with time on their hands Eugene O'Neill's awesome but fascinating *The Iceman Cometh* (Winter Garden—5/2/58). J. B. BOOTHROYD

#### AT THE PICTURES

##### *Orders to Kill* *The Quiet American*

PLENTY to choose from this week; but I think we'll concentrate on the two least obviously "commercial," leaving the others for possible mention next week, which looks as if it may be fairly empty.

The basic point of *Orders to Kill* (Director: Anthony Asquith), which is superficially a "suspense thriller" or "spy story," is to make one realize that—as somebody in it says—one can "measure one's sense of guilt with a range-finder"; and to make one realize what that thought means. It is about a man, in 1944, who is officially chosen and expertly trained to kill an individual enemy. He kills, with distaste but feeling that it is his duty; and he is appalled afterwards to discover that the victim is now known to have been not an enemy after all. He feels in fact like a murderer, as he did not feel when as a bomber pilot he undoubtedly killed

many innocent people. The question is which side you take: whether you believe that since his long-range killings were allowable he shouldn't worry about a short-range killing, or that since his short-range killing was murder the others were too . . . and go on from there.

This implied question is what gives the film unusual strength, but it is gripping even regarded as no more than a straight spy story. What I found rather surprising was to feel that so much of its merit was traceable to the acting: to the acting, and the way mood and atmosphere were established and built up in certain simple dialogue scenes by pauses, artfully-placed stretches of silence, touches of sound—in other words to the *immediate* influence of the director. The qualities in a film that impress me and hold my attention most are usually above all speed and ingenuity of cutting, freshness and inventiveness and observation in detail, and visual design; and though not by any means without these qualities, *Orders to Kill* is not remarkable for them. Particularly at first, there is an oddly empty, artificial air about the scenes: a feeling that they have not been as it were worn or lived in, and that there is too much, too mechanical light. (Just about half an hour from the end, it is as if a definite decision had suddenly been made to get more visual interest into the picture.) At first too the dialogue has a certain monotony of emphasis.

But then the grip of the idea and the simple power of character take over. The film is uneven, not a satisfying worked-out whole; it is made memorable and very well worth seeing by its central problem and by some of the acting,



Marcel Lafitte—LESLIE FRENCH

496

Gene Summers—PAUL MASSIE

[*Orders to Kill*]

notably gentle,

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notably that of Leslie French as the gentle, unnecessarily-killed victim.

My principle, as you may have noticed, is to take a film as it is, and not to object to it on the ground that it doesn't do justice or even does active injustice to what it is said to be based on; and taken on these terms, *The Quiet American* (Director: Joseph L. Mankiewicz) seems to me good, as well as out of the ordinary.

One of its most striking points is the unusual literacy of the dialogue—not a "cinematic" quality, true, but refreshing. I don't mean that the film is (as some people will say) too "talky": I mean that the dialogue necessary to the narrative—which itself involves a good deal of argument and heart-searching—is unusually well worth listening to. Another thing by which I was perhaps disproportionately pleased is that for once the old language difficulty has been overcome, as it should be, by ingenuity in the script: foreign-language-speakers are allowed to use their own language, not an accented or artificially heightened version of English, and it is still made understandable by the construction of the scene.

The story of the "quiet American" (Audie Murphy) who "worked at the profession of friendship," and who was destroyed by an older man (Michael Redgrave) for the unadmitted motive of jealousy, is a perfectly good one; and here it is well and entertainingly done, full of character and interesting detail. That it is not Graham Greene's story is strictly irrelevant.

\* \* \* \* \*

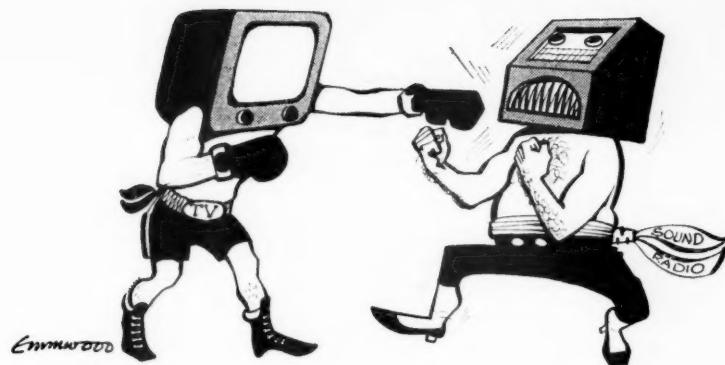
#### Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Besides these there are in London *A Farewell to Arms*, which has been beautifully "photographed at the authentic locales" and otherwise given *everything* (including even a slapstick sequence, when the hero is incompetently bundled into hospital); *Bonjour Tristesse*, an obvious young-girl's story aimed at a youthful public, and probably very successful in pleasing it; and a simple, essentially corny little British—or Irish—picture, *Rooney*, which I'm determined to put in a good word for. This is, undeniably, corny: a story of a gay young Dublin dustman (John Gregson) who has a way with the girls. But it's done with such verve and gaiety that it's thoroughly enjoyable. When I saw it, it got loud applause—which, for once, I wasn't irritated to hear. *The Seventh Seal* (19/3/58) and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (17/7/57) continue.

Not an impressive lot of releases. *Violent Playground* (12/3/58) I thought a rather shallow and contrived story about juvenile delinquency. *Sayonara*, lovely to look at, is another in the "Japan is charming" cycle. Most of *Paris Holiday* is basically a radio comedy show with travelogue illustrations.

RICHARD MALLETT



#### ON THE AIR

##### Listen With Father

ONE of the few delights left to the non-viewer (other than coming the intellectual snob—an act which is beginning to wear thin) is that of dropping in on a neighbour to watch some international match or cup tie, and saying as one leaves "Yes. No doubt about it. It's wonderful for sport." In nine words one dismisses all other aspects of that happy medium—plays, panel games, the naked upper reaches of singing women and the close-ups of someone's prefrontal lobe beneath the scalpel.

But now I see that John Lardner is complaining in the *New Yorker* that TV is not much good for watching some sports, boxing in particular. You can't see the blood, for one thing. (That's not sadism: a cut eye affects a boxer's performance and his opponent's tactics; still, I wonder if they televise bull-fights much.) More seriously, flamboyance looks better than efficiency on TV. Lardner says he would rather listen to boxing on the wireless than watch it on the screen.

Cricket apart, I am on the whole a listener. Of course some games are more susceptible than others to broadcasting. I do not believe that any medium is able to convey the peculiar beauty of a well-hit brassie. On the screen one can see the combination of power and precision which makes a good golfer; the swing is there, but where is the ball? How does the land lie? One loses even the effect of a long approach if, as soon as one has seen the stroke played one is up with another camera by the green to watch the ball bounce and dribble towards the hole. At the other extreme lies chess; twenty symbols are enough to describe all the drive and excitement of a good game and no amount of commentary will add much to it.

Most games fall between these poles, and are suitable for the two media in proportion to their desirability and cameraworthiness. Wimbledon, which I suppose sells more TV sets than anything this side of coronations, is almost

hopeless on sound radio. But I certainly prefer wireless rugger. On the screen direction becomes vague so that passes that are evidently acceptable to the referee sometimes seem to have been thrown yards forward; wing forwards appear from nowhere to nobble a half who looks as though he passed them long ago; cross-kicks are hard to follow and their effectiveness harder still to judge; and so on. I have not watched soccer much, but when I have it seemed to come over better; the patterns of play show up well. It is possible that the average cameraman understands the game better, and so gives his director a less haphazard choice of pictures (if that is how it's done).

But the point on which wireless scores on these and similar games is in the communication of excitement. A good commentator not only gives one the run of the play but lets one share the controlled hysteria of the crowd. No dictator who staged soccer internationals for his private pleasure would find the same excitement in them as does the supporter among his fellows. Watching, I find the remoteness which the screen imposes makes me a dictator-figure. Listening, I am alongside the supporters. This is the main reason why I prefer to listen to boxing; I do not know enough about the art to be moved by either of Mr. Lardner's reasons, but I respond like an iron filing to the magnetism of a good commentator. (And react with fury when, after listening to a man giving our fighter the bare edge in a mounting lather of patriotism, I hear the decision go the other way by several rounds. It doesn't happen often.)

The same applies to racing, but cricket is quite different. Certainly one can't see everything on the screen, but one can get a glimpse of the style of each stroke, which no commentator can hope to lay his tongue on. I have never heard anyone, for instance, come anywhere near describing Graveney's Junoesque approach to cricket. And it is too civilized a sport, too high an art, to be fit for the animal fervour one works up over football. Come Test Match time my neighbours will see quite a lot of me.

PETER DICKINSON

FOR  
WOMEN



## Giovanna Goes to England

Rome, April 2

IT took Giovanna two years to persuade her parents to let her go to England. Not that the Rossis underrated the material advantages of the visit. A working knowledge of English, they knew, would double Giovanna's chances of finding a reasonably good job. She is not a career girl but she will certainly have to earn her keep and has been carefully piloted through school to give her the necessary diplomas.

The trouble was the old question of virtue unprotected. Signor Rossi is a radical and holds advanced views about summit talks and the clerical menace, but when it comes to letting one's own flesh and blood cross the Channel and face the dangers of a metropolis then radical principles are less comfort than the possession of revealed truth. For one thing they prevent Signor Rossi from sending his daughter to stay in an English convent.

So Papa was more difficult to convince than Mama who secretly envied Giovanna's chance of temporary evasion. Fifty years of co-education in State schools and ten years of the franchise have not broken down all the taboos which keep the



Italian woman in half purdah, but Mama belongs to a privileged generation, the one which, twenty years ago, found emancipation on the playing fields of the Fascist youth movement. Since then the playing fields have been taken over by religious bodies and Giovanna's access to them is less direct than her mother's.

With Mama on her side, Papa's conversion was only a question of time. He yielded at last when he heard that the Bianchis next door were sending Liliana and Assuntina to Oxford for a summer course.

Giovanna was triumphant.

"What makes you so keen to go to England?" I asked.

"I want to see the country I've read so much about."

I might have guessed. More than half the books published in Italy and at least half the plays showing in theatres or on television are translated from the English. American and British films fill two cinemas out of three. An astonishingly detailed knowledge of British and American folklore has been demonstrated by candidates for the television

quiz, and familiarity with the English and American novel is indispensable for polite conversation. Giovanna has read more Meredith and Henry James than most of her English contemporaries.

"But what particularly attracts you to England?" I insisted.

"The freedom of English social life."

So Giovanna has gone to England to discover the secret of English social freedom. She will be surprised, when she gets there, to find that the granddaughters of Mrs. Pankhurst and her co-belligerents are more interested in domestic matters than careers. But Giovanna will not be discouraged in her search. What she is really looking for is the secret of the ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon female over the Anglo-Saxon (and often over the Latin) male. Giovanna knows that she is better dressed than the English girls of her age and condition. In domestic lore she can beat them by lengths. She has also crammed more philosophy and literature than they are ever likely to imbibe. She is pretty too and can make the most of her appearance. But in spite of these advantages she is not on equal terms with life. The English woman, she knows, tied though she is to her kitchen sink and her nursery as soon as she gets married, has an inner freedom whose secret Giovanna does not possess.

When she comes back I'll ask her if she found it. If she's the intelligent girl I take her for she will send Papa Rossi to Oxford for a summer course.

NINETTA JUCKER

### Career Girl : 6 — Chef

A WHIFF of *Cuir de Russie* in the hair  
Is fair;  
A taste of *Cuir de Russie* in the pot  
Is not.  
A little touch of garlic on the meat  
Is sweet;  
A little touch of garlic on the breath  
Is death.

### Hon. Sch. Lit . . .

A YEAR or two ago, when I went to school, it seemed perfectly simple. My mother just gave me a trousseau that would have outweighed

the Queen of Sheba's (assuming the Queen of Sheba wore lacrosse boots and sensible shoes) and saw me off on the 5.15 to Seaford.

Now I have studied the handbooks to English schools I see the momentous decisions that had to be made in choosing a daughter's liberal education.

You should make quite sure that one of the staff is Hon. Sch. Lit. Hum., and another F. Inst. P. (or, failing that, Dipl. Leipzig Conservatoire). A Dip. Pedagogy is advisable, though not essential, and a Dipl. Dietetics or a Dipl. Académie des Épées de Paris will, so I am informed, add tone. You needn't worry about the merits of N.F.U. or G.R.S.M. provided there are visiting staff for flute, oboe and clarinet or a resident instructress and six ponies. You should, however, make sure that every boarding house has the requisite Senior House Mistress, Second House Mistress, Matron, Assistant Matron and Housekeeper, that the drainage is tested every holiday, that the ventilation is excellent, and that there is regular intercourse between the Houses. The better schools, you will find, teach organ and cookery, needle-work and fencing, the viola, the violin and the violoncello. They are built at altitudes of about 400 feet.

I have read every page of the handbooks and weighed the pros and cons, I've considered the colour-schemes of three hundred blazers and deciphered two hundred and eighty-seven Latin mottoes. I'm all for the liberal education that includes a Liberal Diet and T.T. Certified Milk.

JOANNA RICHARDSON

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### At Home to Callers

I AM at my most vulnerable on my own doorstep. There is something about being on its snug side that frets my sense of social justice to such an extent that I am unable to expedite unwelcome callers. We linger, a Jehovah's Witness, perhaps, and I, taking our spiritual clothes off at ten in the morning, until, smitten with my own disdain, I have to ask him in, or at least buy his little book.

It is worse when it is raining. The Saturday we had chops instead of chicken was the one a frail-looking woman started to unpack a heavy box

of pictures of cats she had painted on the wet and muddy doorstep. Her visit set me back, for she also seemed inexhaustible on the subjects of painting and pottery and the desperate business of making a living. But the chops weren't too bad.

One of my happier callers, it seemed, was a small boy who came to tell me that I had won twenty-five pounds in a Boys' Brigade draw. I hunted feverishly for the stubs of the tickets I dimly recalled having bought at the doorstep months before. "Have an apple, a glass of sherry, sit down"—I urged hysterically as I rushed from the obvious treasures to explorations of improbable places like the log basket and a cache for rubber bands. He only stood and waited, until I had to admit that I had, so to speak, drawn a blank. He went away, never to return, and inquiries of the Boys' Brigade headquarters elicited only the stirring fact that draws are against Brigade principles and that this one, if it was not a "try-on," must have been organized by a "pirate" branch which had been pressing for affiliation.

I know my weakness. It is such that a rag-and-bone man can get away with a usable umbrella—"Make a nice colander"—bearing a solid gold clasp—"Might fetch a tanner"—leaving me

with a curious sense of omission in the transaction and the withering realization that this is because I got nothing out of it.

It is also such that a dull morning may be brightened by a visit from the eccentric old lady who mends furs—"for Miss Pamela Frankau, whom you may telephone if you wish"—and who never sends postcards "because of the burglars, my dear."

CHES GUDENIAN

\*

### Obliging

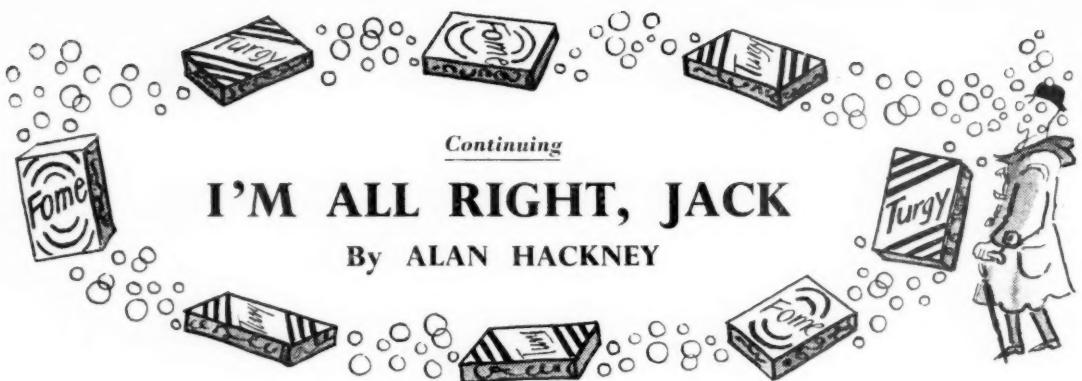
SOMEONE kind  
A dainty Scent  
With the washing-up  
Has blent;  
Made a really  
Rare Bouquet  
To enhance  
The mothproof spray;

Fixed the floor-cream  
So they sniff  
"Something spilt?  
It smells as if"—  
Done all this  
For you and me!  
Just how wrong  
Can someone be?

ANGELA MILNE



"They won't get me going round showing my legs in Technicolor."



*Continuing*

## I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK

By ALAN HACKNEY

*Stanley Windrush, who is living in London with his aunts, is considering entering industry after an unsuccessful spell on probation at the Foreign Office.*

**S**TANLEY spent a day at Oxford consulting the University Appointments Board and left with four duplicated vacancy notices in his pocket. Two of his letters of application brought courteous though negative replies. But in the course of the week there came two invitations to attend for interview.

"They're both pretty good firms," said Stanley, "and they've both got a steady future, it seems to me. One depends on people keeping on washing—that's Spindley's, they make Fome and Turgy, and the other relies on people eating—that's Bumper Bars. I've never actually eaten one but I'm going to try some to-day."

"That sounds a sensible idea, Stanley," said Great-Aunt Dolly, "and it sounds quite like a slogan, too. Why don't you go in for advertising?"

"No, I must go where they are crying out for me," said Stanley.

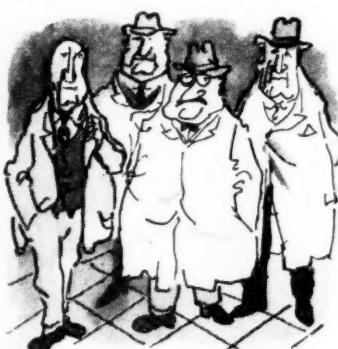
Spindley's, the English division of the great Americo-Dutch-Swedish-German soap and detergent octopus, said they looked forward to seeing him at their Boltley, Lancs, factory on the fourteenth. The factory (Telegraphic Address, Sprinklefome Arkpark Boltley) lay in the outer fringes of the vigorous Northern cotton town. It had been well and cheaply put up towards the end of the depression in the neglected district of Arkwright Park, but plans to have surrounded it with a small garden city ("Integrating it with the

community" was a phrase bandied freely about at the time) had fallen through as business prospects revived.

Stanley's taxi from the station bumbled over cobbles towards the place and, having come between neat piles of oil drums and an avenue of the sort of ten-foot wooden reels of cable that are so prone to being left out in the weather, stopped before glass doors.

Face to face with industry at last Stanley perked up and went in out of the drizzle to find his destiny.

"All the other Arts graduates came yesterday," said a secretary as she showed Stanley to his starting point.



"They're all chemistry graduates today, but we're fitting you in."

The chemists had assembled in a glass cage of an office on the first floor of the building, a chubby group with the extraordinary air of juvenility peculiar to chemists. They were mostly gazing through the windows, which

looked out on three sides to interminable low stacks of raw bar soap.

"Good morning. Doesn't it smell clean?" said Stanley, and all the chemists said good morning too, and resumed their gazing.

Stanley had a look at a wall model of soap production. The chemists presumably knew all about this, and were ignoring it. But like Mr. Boyle's book of colours to Pepys, it was so chemical that Stanley could understand but little of it, except that he marvelled at the label "Fatty Acid" at one juncture. It seemed too like a nickname to be genuine.

Shortly they were interrupted by the arrival of the factory manager, cold-eyed in a baggy suit. With him came a collection of battered fellows in white coats and old trilby hats. Evidently a soapmaking team, thought Stanley.

"These gentlemen are our top management, gentlemen," said the factory manager, to Stanley's incredulity. "Each of you will go round with three of them in turn and be shown the processes. After that there is lunch in the canteen before I interview you."

"Starting with palm oil," said Stanley's first expositor. "Follow me."

They walked in silence through lanes in the stacks of soap, and up iron stairways. On the next floor up Stanley's nose twitched and he began to sneeze incessantly.

"Why am I sneezing?" he asked the man.

"Ditto, probably," said the man. "Particles in the air from that end. That's the bottom of the Ditto tower, where they're shovelling it into those hoppers. Most people get used to it quickly."

"That's the stuff for—Aah!—washing things whiter than anything else, isn't it?" gasped Stanley.

"You've got the wrong idea," said the man. "Leave that nonsense to the advertising boys in Liverpool. It's a good product, and so's Fome, but it's for a different job."

"Oh, I know it's good," said Stanley, "but I can't persuade my great-aunts to use either of them. They said they tried and they got a rash."

"They may be exceptional," said the man. "Quite likely, but I can tell you my daughter-in-law's baby had her nappies done in both with never a sign of a spot since birth. However, I'm taking you up here to see the palm oil."

He opened a door and pointed out.

"There it is," he said.

The palm oil was not, to Stanley, of enormous interest. It was the contents apparently, of the million oil drums he had passed on the way in. From the door, however, was a fairly comprehensive view of Boltley.

"It's not as smoky as you might think," said Stanley.

"It's Wakes Week,"

said the man, "or you'd see the smoke all right. All the town's shut down and off to Blackpool."

"Oh, but you're not having a Wakes Week? What a shame," said Stanley. "I'd been meaning to ask about hours and holidays."

"You can't leave soap," said the man, who proved to be the Soap Production Controller. "The kettles must go on, night and day. They're the next stage, after additives. Follow me."

The kettles proved to be great vats, and they climbed up more iron staircases to look in the tops of them. They were lit internally and when the porthole was opened Stanley could see a remarkable wrinkled surface below, giving an occasional bubbling puff.

"This lot's about half done," said the Soap Controller after a fractional glance. "See how the colour's changing?"

"Yes indeed," said Stanley. "It's

going a sort of appalling grey. Do they have to stand and watch it *all* the time?"

He was depressed if this were indeed the prospect, but the Soap Controller had moved across to look at the next kettle and did not hear him. However, the only other human beings in sight were two chemists at a distant control panel, and one of the chemist candidates was being shown it by his guide.

They saw rough moulds, and trimming, stamping and wrapping machinery.

The morale of the girls employed seemed up to par, several whistling in an odd way after they had passed.

Stanley had just recovered from his sneezing when the Soap Controller

point straight down, of course, or he wouldn't bother asking me. He considered for some time.

"They'll squirt it in from round the edges, I imagine," he said.

"Why shouldn't they point straight down?" asked the manager. "That's the obvious way. Look."

He yanked the porthole open and there was no doubt about it. They did all point straight down. A gust of hot Ditto-filled air came out briefly and attacked Stanley.

The manager said nothing, but shut the porthole and set off down the steps.

Stanley took the opportunity of a few quick breaths in the open before going in and down to the bottom of the tower, but it was no use. Once in the Ditto shovelling room his sneezes came on again. The manager appeared to cut short his explanatory remarks about the Ditto process and led the way to a quiet corner of the bar-soap cutting room.

"Tell me about yourself," he asked, not without some curiosity.

Stanley blew the Ditto out of his nose, took a deep breath and began.

"Mr. Windrush," said the manager after a while, "you must realize why we are interested in you. It's not to make better soap—that's a job for the chemists. Your concern in production would be to make soap *better*. Speeding up processes, time-and-motion study, efficiency generally, cutting out waste time. Now tell me quickly why you think you would succeed at that?"

"That's extraordinarily difficult," said Stanley. "I mean, you seem to make it terribly efficiently as it is, don't you?" The Appointment Board man's words rang in his ears. "I can offer you intelligence, a trained mind, and enormous enthusiasm for the job," he went on. "With a person like myself with a fresh mind you might well have the whole factory organized an entirely different way."

"We must decide whether to take



swapped him for one of the chemists and handed him over to the factory manager.

"I'll show you the Ditto process, Mr. Windrush," said the manager bleakly.

They began climbing steps again and came out suddenly through a door on to a narrow railed ledge. Stanley, unprepared, reeled slightly at the view below, and gripped the rail firmly. They were nearly at the top of the Ditto tower.

"Through there," said the manager, indicating a plate glass porthole, "are the nozzles spraying the Ditto solution, and a blast of hot air is coming up the tower. That dries the particles and they fall below as powder. Now, which way will the nozzles be arranged?"

If I'm going into detergent production, thought Stanley, I'll have to be able to answer complicated mechanical questions like that. They wouldn't

the chance, Mr. Windrush," said the manager. He looked at his watch. "Would you make your way to the canteen for lunch? We shall be having visitors from the Coloured Conference later on and we must keep to schedule."

Spindley's canteen was patronized, following American practice, by management and workers alike, master and man breaking bread together in a keen atmosphere of democracy and Ditto particles. The food had a robust mass-production flavour and the tables Formica tops. All the chemist candidates were chattering together at one table, but Stanley ate apart in a depressed condition.

Three workers joined his table and with a great flourishing of sauce and tomato ketchup bottles started to eat.

"New, lad?" asked one of them in a friendly tone.

"Oh, I'm just here having a look round," said Stanley.

"Tom'll put you right, lad," said one of the others over his *Daily Mirror*. "Always ask the union man when in doubt, eh Tom?"

"Oh, you're the union man?" said Stanley. "That's very interesting. But actually I was thinking about joining the management as a trainee."

"Fair enough," said the man Tom, "I've noothing to hide. I maintain there's the best labour relations in this factory of any in the town. I suppose you went to college?"

"Yes, Apocalypse College, Oxford," said Stanley. "Do you know it?"



"Can't say I do, except by repute," said the union man. "But perhaps you can tell me: how is it that every worker given a state university education wants to become a recruit to the boss class? It's the same with all the young chaps here from Boltley Grammar."

"I wasn't clever enough to get a scholarship to Oxford, though," said Stanley. "You see, my father paid. Apocalypse was his old college too, so I got in."

"Aye, well perhaps doing that might've kept someone else out," said the man with the *Daily Mirror* in his blunt Boltley way. "Not that I'm blaming you; it's the society we live in. I'd like to see a real social democracy with everyone, no matter what 'is colour, class or creed, standing just the same chance of a job."

"Hear, hear, Brother Sidebotham," said the union man. "I concur."

"Oh, you're absolutely right," said Stanley, "but there's a faint chance I might not get through. Anyway,

excuse me, I've got to get back; they're behind schedule. They have to get finished with us before these people from the Coloured Conference start to come round."

"Excuse me," said the third man, joining in the conversation for the first time. "I hope you don't mind me asking. Are they your own teeth?"

"Oh yes," said Stanley, in some embarrassment.

"I thought they were somehow," said the third man, sticking relentlessly to it. "You keep them nice and white, and it just crossed me mind they might be dentures."

"Well, good-bye," said Stanley, uncertainly, and took his tray back.

"Tom," said Mr. Sidebotham, "I wonder what these darkies are coming round for? I reckon we could do without any coloured chaps being introduced here as workers while any Boltley chap's out of a job."

The third man nodded.

"We 'ad enough of that on the trams," he said.

Back in Eaton Square the next morning, with all expenses paid, Stanley was interested to see that an incident had occurred late the previous afternoon at a Boltley soap factory, in which several members of a delegation from the Coloured Conference had been inundated in an apparently accidental release of a quantity of detergent foam.

There was, he saw, no mention of Ditto having washed them whiter.

*(To be continued)*



Douglas

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